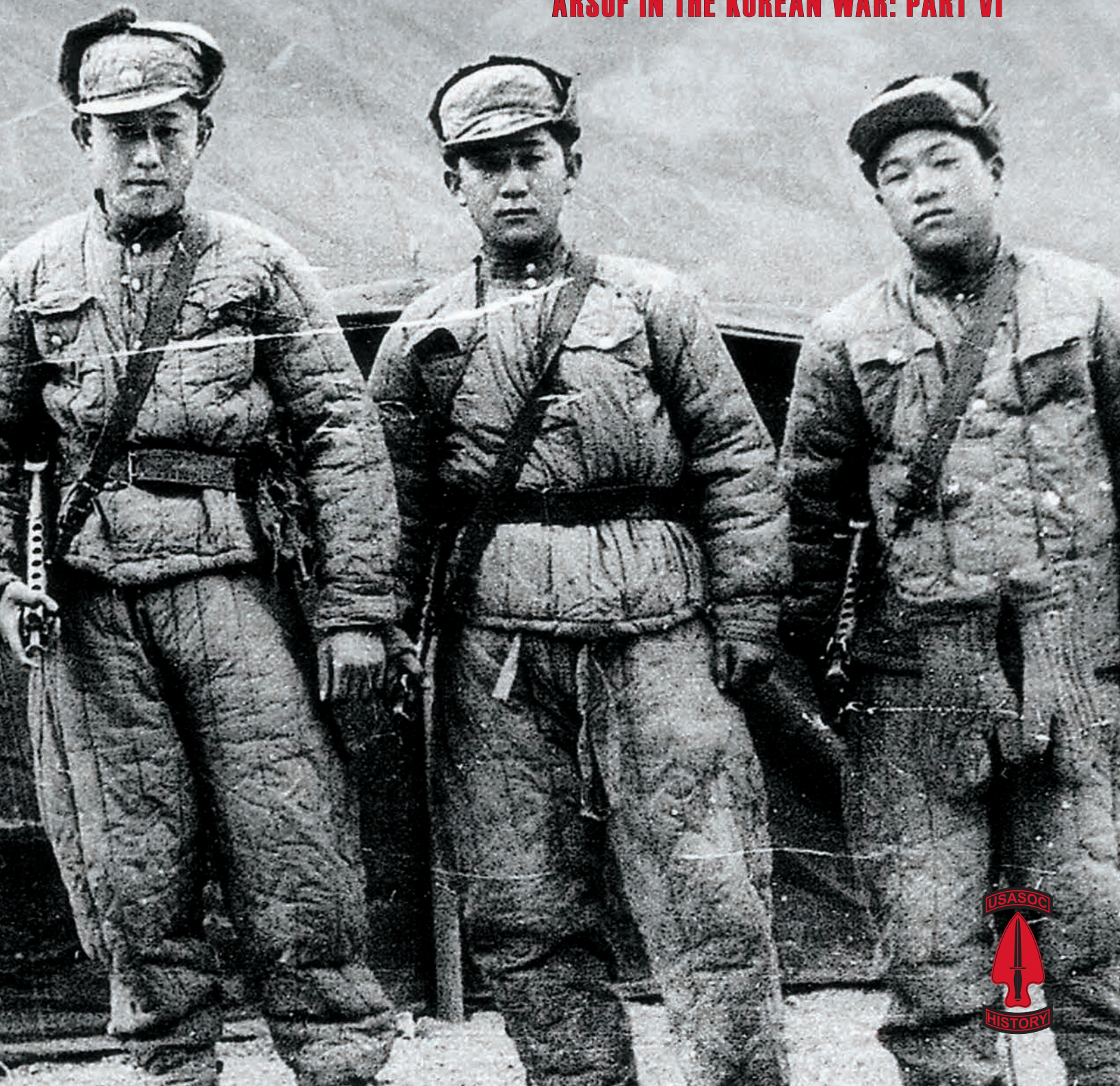
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Veritas

ARSOF IN THE KOREAN WAR: PART VI









Cover Photo:
Three former Chinese Communist Prisoners of War (POW) turned to function as tactical Liaison Officer (TLO) agents prepare for their mission behind enemy lines.

Veritas

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IBC **"Until They Come Home"**

The articles in this issue of *Veritas* deal primarily with the U.S. Army's interaction with friendly guerrilla forces; anti-Communist North Koreans who fought alongside or for Americans in support of United Nations goals. The use of terms like 'partisans,' 'irregulars,' or 'resistance' were widely (and often inaccurately) used during and after the war to describe what are essentially guerrillas. For clarification, when the term 'partisan' is used, these articles imply the more doctrinally correct term 'guerrilla.'

The Army defined a guerrilla force as "an irregular force, organized on a military basis, supported chiefly by sympathetic elements of the population, and operating against established civil and military authority. It may receive support from a foreign government" *[FM 31-21, Organization and Conduct of Guerrilla Warfare (Oct 1951)], 2.*

The Army also defined resistance movements at that time as "the operations of discontented or hostile elements of a population against established civil and military authority by various hidden and open methods. The individuals who take part in a resistance movement are held together by common sympathies and interests, often political. They may ally themselves to external regular forces or to a government whose national and military aims are sympathetic to their own. The individuals of a resistance movement who band together on a military basis are the guerrilla forces of a resistance movement" *[FM 31-21, Organization and Conduct of Guerrilla Warfare (Oct 1951)], 2-3.*

The Azimuth of the USASOC History Office

This issue was to conclude the ARSOF in Korea series. As the ground swell of responses from the veterans kept growing with each Army SOF functional issue [*ad hoc* special operations (1950)], Rangers (1950-1951), tactical CA and Psywar, and strategic Psywar (two issues), the initial plan for two issues evolved into six. We saved Special Warfare, today's seventh warfighting function, for last because it was both the most confusing at the time, and currently the most mythologized. Unfortunately, an analysis was not done before Vietnam since many of the errors of Korea were perpetuated in that war by some of the same players.

However, as we brought order to the most misunderstood aspect of the Korean War, the volume of fog, smoke, and flotsam to be dissipated and number of mirrors in need of shattering necessitated the division of issue six into two parts. The beginning of Armistice discussions in the spring of 1951 was a natural dividing point. When more attention was applied to Special Warfare, conventional battle lines had solidified along the 38th Parallel and the North Korean Communists had reinstituted tight social, economic, and political controls countrywide to 'dry up' guerrilla support 'behind the lines.' U.S. military services, United Nations (UN) contingents, Korean military and civilian components, and a fledgling Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) conducted Special Warfare in the absence of contingency plans and without defined roles.

To reduce confusion authors use 'friendly guerrilla forces' and purposefully avoid 'partisans,' 'irregulars,' and 'resistance movements' where possible. Blasphemous as it may appear to special ops warriors, we stuck to period doctrine, U.S. Army *Field Manual (FM) 31-21, Organization and Conduct of Guerrilla Warfare* (October 1951). Army SOF icon, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Russell W. Volckmann, guerrilla commander in North Luzon during WWII, authored *FM 31-21* and *FM 31-20, Operations Against Guerrilla Forces* (September 1950). Only Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) Special Warfare operations and activities until June 1951 are presented in Part I (sixth issue).

Line crossing teams and guerrilla advisors were missions of EUSA guerrilla command. Colonel (COL) John H. McGee, Chief, Miscellaneous Division (Special Activities), G-3, Eighth Army, directed guerrilla and counter-guerrilla operations from 1950-1951. He also organized and fielded the GHQ [Far East Command (FEC) General Headquarters] Raider and EUSA Ranger Companies and created a UN Reception Center to give basic training to non-English speaking foreign military contingents. And, COL McGee established a Ranger Training Center for the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army.

The role of the CIA and JACK (Joint Advisory Commission, Korea), its paramilitary element, EUSA, FEC, CCRAK (FEC Combined Command for Reconnaissance Activities, Korea), and the individual roles of Special Forces-trained officers and sergeants in 8240th AU will be addressed in Part II (seventh issue). Many thanks to the veterans of the EUSA guerrilla command who contributed to this issue, especially those who commented on draft articles. This involvement reinforces credibility and cultivates pride of ownership.

Special thanks to Ms Nancy 'Nan' Kutulas, our intrepid research librarian. CHB

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GUERRILLAS *in Their Midst*

An Introduction to *Veritas* Vol. 8, No. 2

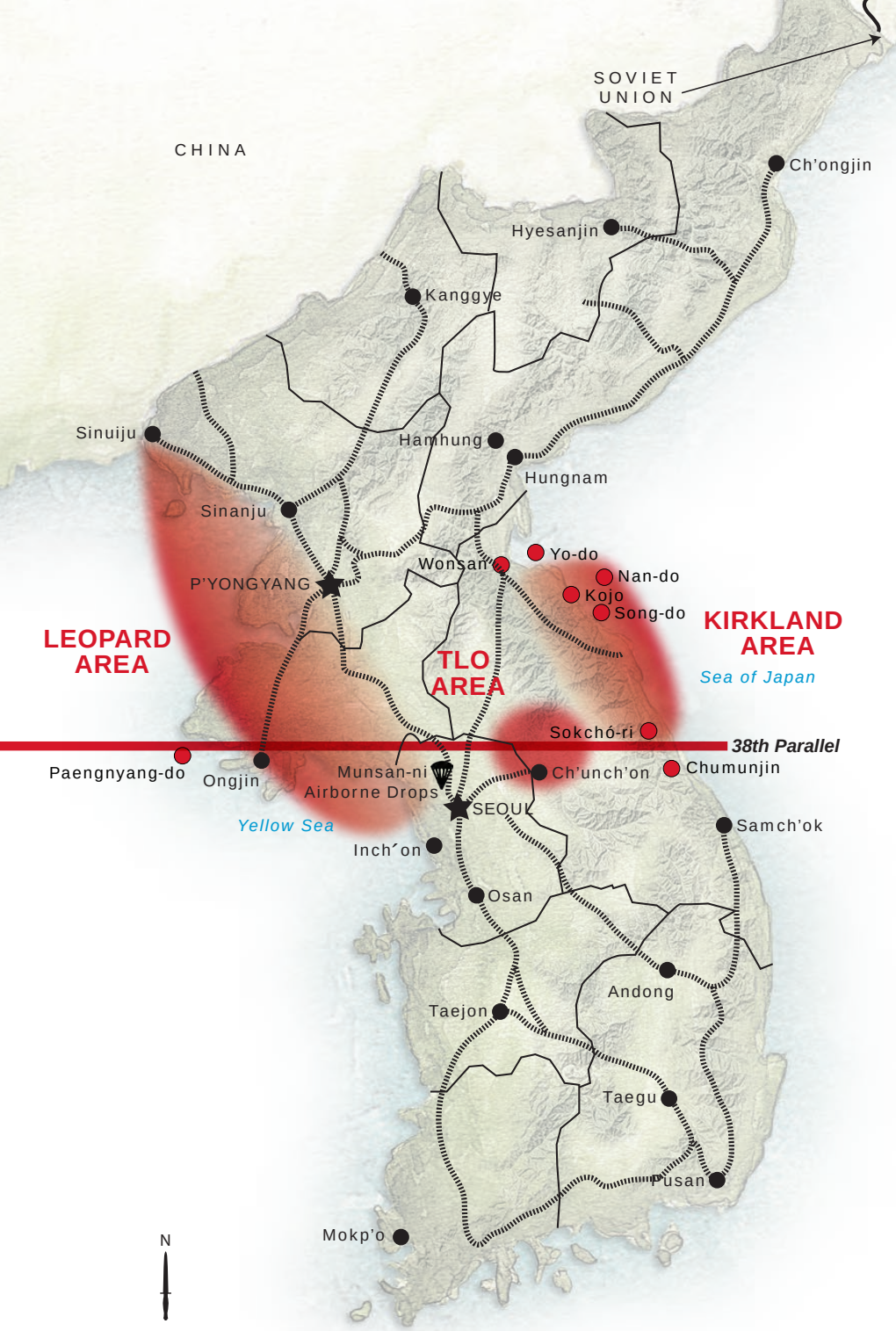
By Kenneth Finlayson

One important aspect of the Korean War was the U.S. Army's effort to integrate the large numbers of anti-Communist guerrillas into its campaign. Scholarly research on these operations has been scant and what is known comes largely from the memoirs of the participants. Consequently, certain inaccuracies and 'mythology' have become a part of the history of unconventional warfare in Korea, a subject that contains many relevant lessons for today's Army. The next two issues of *Veritas* will present a detailed picture of the Eighth Army's creation of a guerrilla command and explain the various entities that were involved in unconventional warfare during the war. This issue will, with some exceptions, restrict itself to the early history of the origins of the North Korean anti-Communist guerrilla movement that began in 1945 through the first six months of guerrilla command operations in 1951. The guerrillas, while a force provider for the U.S. Eighth Army (EUSA), were also a dilemma.

The Soviet Union's eleventh hour declaration of war against Japan on 8 August 1945 gave the Communists a part in the post-war demobilization of the Japanese Army in China and Korea. This role provided a foothold in North Korea sufficient to establish a Communist regime north of the 38th Parallel. After a brief period of internal conflict, Soviet-supported Kim Il Sung emerged as the leader of the North Korean Communist Party. During his consolidation of power, Kim alienated many who fell under his rule. Thousands of North Koreans fled south. This exodus was

The presence of North Korean anti-Communist guerrillas on the off-shore islands represented a significant opportunity for the Eighth U.S. Army to harass and tie-down North Korean and Chinese forces. The Army organized a guerrilla command to exploit the presence of these forces.







Colonel John H. McGee, G-3 Miscellaneous Division, organized the guerrilla command to train the anti-Communist North Koreans. His efforts laid the groundwork for special warfare operations throughout the war.

eventually halted. By early 1950, those opposed to the Communist regime were forced to hide in the mountains. Anti-Communist sentiment was particularly strong among the people of Hwanghae and Pyongan Provinces on the southwest coast of North Korea.

The North Korean People's Army (NKPA) attack against South Korea in June 1950 removed many of its Army units from the provinces and allowed the anti-Communists some freedom to organize. The UN landing at Inch'on in September 1950 routed the NKPA, sending it into headlong retreat, opening the way for anti-Communist elements in North Korea to regain control of their villages. This democratic freedom was short-lived, when the massive incursion by the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) in November 1950 again pushed the UN forces south of Seoul. It was during the CCF offensive that many anti-Communist resisters sought refuge on the border islands off the western coast.

With as many as twenty-five thousand guerrillas postured on the North Korean flank, a desperate Eighth Army seized the opportunity to potentially tie up substantial numbers of enemy troops along the coast. The fact that the guerrillas were poorly-trained and equipped was the dilemma for the EUSA G-3 (Operations). To turn this problem into an asset, Eighth Army in January 1951 went to its veteran troubleshooter, Colonel (COL) John H. McGee, G-3 Miscellaneous Division.

A World War II veteran of the Southwest Pacific Theater and limited guerrilla operations in the Philippines, COL McGee was no stranger to difficult assignments. He had formed the Eighth Army Rangers, created a Ranger Training Center, organized the GHQ Raider Company and established the United Nations Reception Center to integrate the military forces of other nations into the war effort.[1] COL McGee was the architect of the EUSA's counter-guerrilla effort to destroy enemy guerrillas, deserters and by-passed soldiers who continued to harass UN troops behind friendly lines. These experiences provided McGee with a keen appreciation of guerrilla operations. His approach was to form an EUSA organization that utilized existing guerrilla formations to accomplish three specific missions.

His first priority was to train the guerrilla bands to effectively conduct raids and sabotage operations against North Korean units stationed along the western coast

north of the 38th Parallel. Concurrently, he sought to establish a guerrilla base in the mountains along the east coast of North Korea and thirdly, form a unit to parachute into central North Korea to conduct sabotage and collect intelligence. The articles in this issue detail McGee's efforts to establish the guerrilla command, and the nature of operations in its first six months.[2] He was to lay the groundwork to accomplish these objectives.

On the west coast, the large guerrilla population was formed into two organizations known as WILLIAM ABLE Base (later LEOPARD Base) and WOLFPACK (activated a year later), that performed similar missions from island strongholds on the west coast. In the east, Task Force KIRKLAND (TF KIRKLAND) conducted raids and agent insertions from a base on Nan-do (Al-som), an island ten miles off-shore north of the 38th Parallel. TF Kirkland would continue to conduct operations on the east coast until the signing of the Armistice in 1953. The Tactical Liaison Office (TLO) fulfilled a portion of McGee's third priority, intelligence collection.

Originally created in 1949 as the Korean Liaison Office (KLO) within the Far East Command (FEC) G-2, the mission of the TLO changed in early 1951 from the gathering of human intelligence (HUMINT) to support a strategic campaign to collecting tactical intelligence forward of EUSA front line units. This shift in mission resulted in a name change to the Tactical Liaison Office. By infiltrating North Korean and Chinese POWs and defectors and South Korean volunteers through the front lines, TLO tried to provide a current intelligence picture to the division commanders of the opposition facing them. Of particular interest, the first school-trained Special Forces soldiers to be deployed to a combat theater arrived in Korea beginning in March 1953. The experiences of Master Sergeant (MSG) John E. Kessling and other early Special Forces troops form a significant part of the TLO story. The TLO remained in operation until 1954, long after the signing of the Armistice.

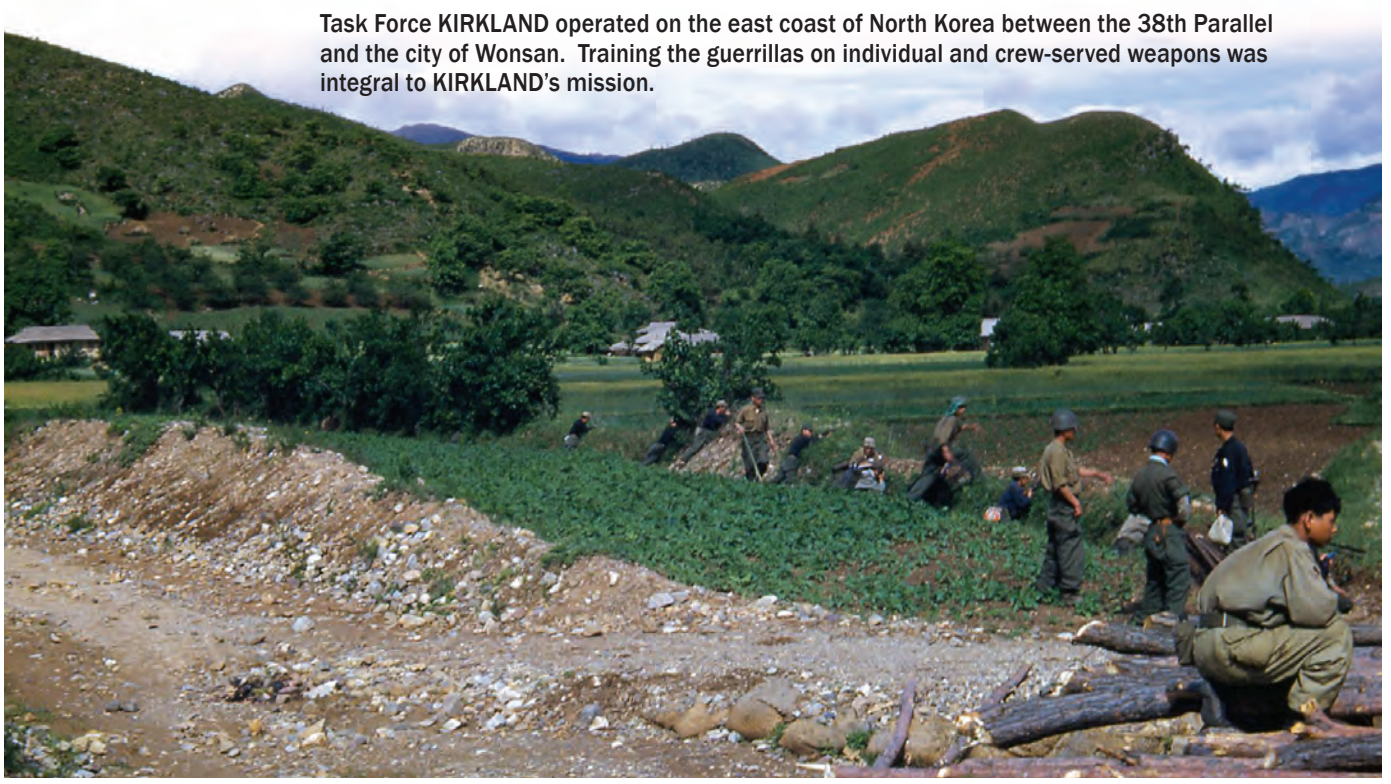
This issue looks at the historical background of anti-Communist North Korean guerrillas based on the off-shore islands and how EUSA formed a guerrilla command to capitalize on their existence. Both TF KIRKLAND and the TLO are covered in detail. An account of an early guerrilla operation told from the perspective of the leader is provided. The next issue will look at the evolution of the guerrilla command and describe the various units and agencies that conducted special operations as the war progressed. The role of Special Forces in the training and the eventual demobilization of the guerrillas after the Armistice will be covered. What follows will bring more clarity to what has traditionally been a murky picture of the guerrilla war in Korea.

Kenneth Finlayson is the USASOC Deputy Command Historian. He earned his PhD from the University of Maine, and is a retired Army officer. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, special operations aviation, and World War II special operations units.

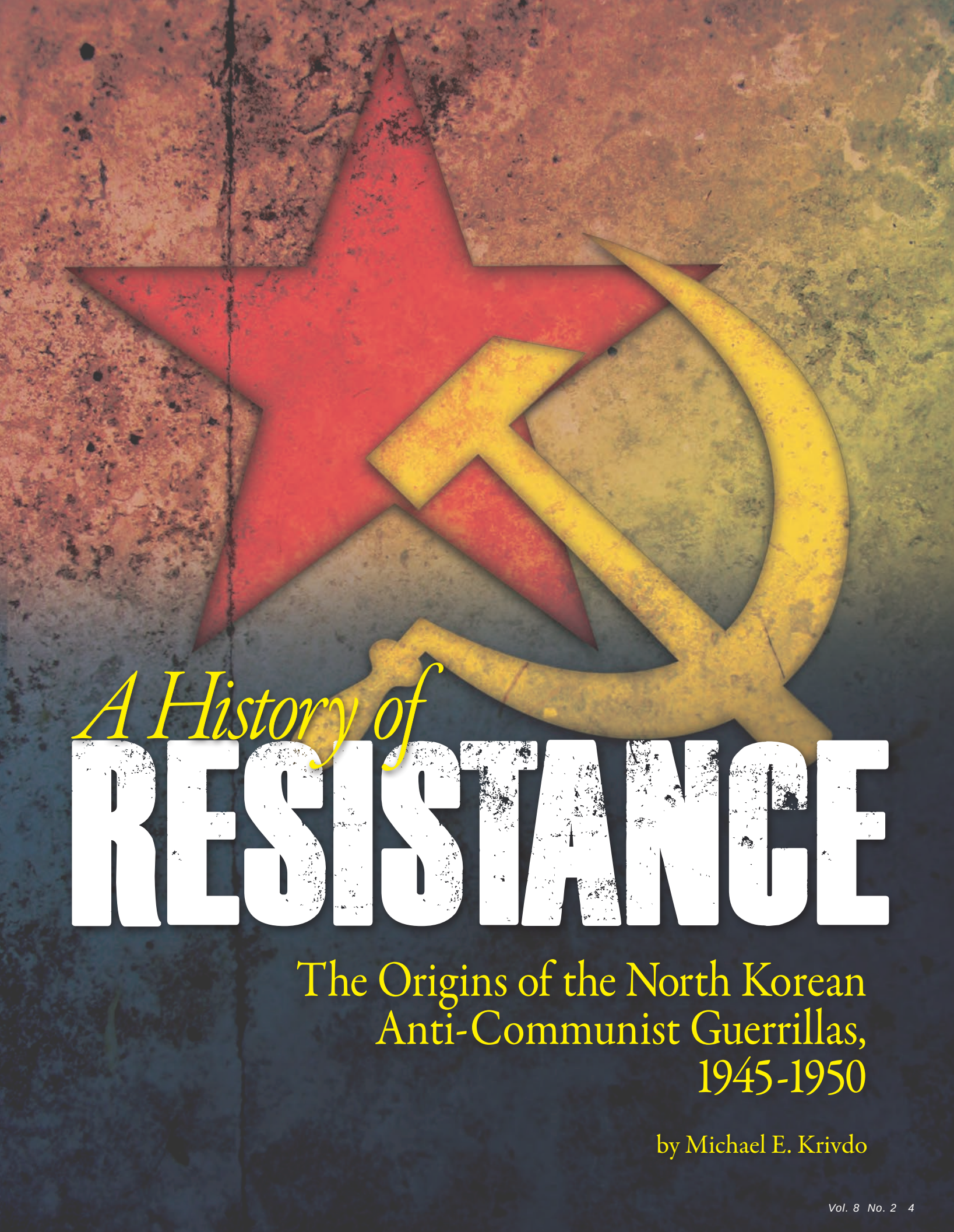
Endnotes

1 Charles H. Briscoe, "Born of Desperation: Early Special Operations in the Korean War, *Veritas* Vol 6 No. 1, 14-22; Eugene G. Piasecki, "Eighth Army Rangers: First in Korea," *Veritas* Vol 6, No. 1, 2010, 34-44.

2 The EUSA's guerrilla command was initially called Attrition Section from 15 January 1951 until 4 May 1951. At that time the name was changed to the 8086th Army Unit (AU) and then on 9 December 1951, the 8086th became the 8240th AU. Much of the confusion about special operations in Korea stems from these name changes and the tendency to lump all operations in the war under the 8240th rubric.



Task Force KIRKLAND operated on the east coast of North Korea between the 38th Parallel and the city of Wonsan. Training the guerrillas on individual and crew-served weapons was integral to KIRKLAND's mission.



A History of RESISTANCE

The Origins of the North Korean Anti-Communist Guerrillas, 1945-1950

by Michael E. Krivdo

The sudden reversal of fortunes brought on by the allied amphibious operation at Inch'on in September 1950 did not go unnoticed by North Korean citizens, particularly those who had long opposed Communist rule. Now in shambles, the once-powerful North Korean People's Army (NKPA) retreated rapidly to the north to escape pursuing United Nations (UN) forces. In October 1950, longtime anti-Communist rebel Kim Chang Song listened to the sounds of approaching artillery and contemplated ways to seize control of his village. From their hidden camp in the rugged mountains, Kim and his like-minded neighbors planned attacks against the Communist Party members, North Korean police, and the local militia troops that had taxed and persecuted them for the past five years.[2]

Earlier, Kim's band had stolen five North Korean military uniforms, some weapons, and ammunition. Disguised as soldiers the small group set up a roadblock and ambushed an NKPA vehicle, killing the enemy soldiers before they could react. The truck yielded a treasure: 108 well-used Russian rifles with ammunition that Kim quickly distributed to his other partisans. He also provided them with detailed plans for a coordinated attack on multiple enemy positions to commence at 0900 hours on 13 October. Once those actions were finished, Kim's guerrillas focused on larger targets. By noon on 15 October Kim's *ad hoc* band had rid their township of every Communist soldier, policeman, and Party member, proudly restoring freedom to the area for the first time since September 1945.[3] Although the size of the resistance movement varied from place to place, in areas like Kim's Hwanghae Province the groups achieved significant results for a short period of time.

... a number of remote little islands in the Yellow Sea, unnoticed before ... suddenly had become last-stand strongholds of North Korean antagonists to the Communist regime." [1]

What circumstances could compel tens of thousands of North Koreans to risk everything and fight alongside Americans against the Communist forces during the Korean War? This article argues that some elements of the North Korean population resisted Communism between 1945 and 1950, and that their opposition established a nascent resistance movement before the war began. In many cases, these early protesters became the leaders for the several community-based paramilitary groups that fought to rid their townships and districts of Communist influence when the North Korean government was most vulnerable. These irregulars continued to engage their enemy when the military situation again favored the NKPA when the Chinese intervened. The article focuses on the key events between 1945 and 1950 that produced the guerrilla forces of 1951 through 1953: how Korea was divided following the surrender of Japan to the Allies, how changing social and political conditions within the North generated dissent, and how the gradual tightening of Communist control over North Koreans after 1945 helped spawn a grass roots resistance movement that fought to free its members from a repressive regime. It also details how the changing tides of the Korean War affected those partisans who continued to fight Communism.

The Allied victory over Japan in August 1945 ended World War II, yet left hundreds of thousands of Japanese soldiers still occupying large portions of mainland Asia, from China to Burma. The sheer scale of the task of disarming them and reestablishing local government functions over such a wide expanse challenged American military and political planners. To complicate matters, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), by declaring war against Japan on 8 August 1945, insisted on being involved in the disarmament process.[4] Although there would be no combined occupation and administration of Japan as there had been in Germany, it became practically impossible to keep the USSR out of postwar reconstruction efforts in Asia. And, after its last-minute invasion of neighboring China's industry and resource-rich Manchurian Province in early August, the Soviets used their disarming of Japanese troops in North Korea as a toehold to influence events there, further insisting on taking part in that country's restoration to sovereignty, preferably under Communist leadership. At that time, North Korea held most of the industrial capacity and power generation capability in the peninsula, thereby making it a prize to whomever controlled that region. Additionally, because the USSR shared a common boundary with Korea, Soviet leaders considered that region to have strategic significance as a buffer from the West.[5] Complicating Korea's internal governmental restoration was the fact that it had been administered as a Japanese dependency since 1910. Because of their association with the hated Japanese, most Korean citizens were distrustful of the native Korean civil servants and believed they needed to be replaced by persons not tainted by colonialism.[6] The Soviet occupiers exploited this point to their advantage.

In an effort to resolve the problems of restoring sovereignty to the Korean people, the United States and the Soviet Union



Soviet soldiers march through North Korea as occupying force, October, 1945.



1945: Dividing Korea along 38th Parallel.

agreed to a temporary division of the peninsula along the 38th Parallel: the U.S. would disarm Japanese troops south of that arbitrarily designated line, while the Soviets did the same for Korea north of it.[7] Although never intended to serve as a functional boundary between two sovereign entities, Soviet intransigence about creating a friendly buffer state linked to industrial and mineral production in the USSR led to installing a Communist government in North Korea. Meanwhile, the United States, United Kingdom (UK), and the United Nations' newly created Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) supported a democratic government in the south.[8] The conditions were set for a clash of ideological differences between the two Korean states.

Following UN-supervised elections in the south and the establishment of the Republic of Korea (ROK) on 15 August 1948 under President Syngman Rhee, most American forces departed. They left behind a small Provisional Military Advisory Group (PMAG) of only one hundred soldiers to train the new nation's lightly armed military. With U.S. national interests focused more on demobilization and disarmament after its victory in the World War, PMAG personnel focused their efforts on training and equipping a small constabulary force to serve as the ROK Army. By design, the ROK's military had no tanks, no offensive aircraft, only light artillery and little anti-air capability.[9] In the north, however, increasingly authoritarian and aggressive Communist rule took hold and its military developed along quite different lines.

With the full support and assistance of the USSR, new Communist-trained North Korean leaders like Kim Il Sung instituted radical changes designed to strengthen their military power and tighten the dominant Communist Party's grip on the population. Large quantities of Soviet military equipment, supplies, and advisers poured in, and tens of thousands of Koreans who had fought alongside Mao Zedong's Red Army in China constituted the combat-hardened core of the powerful NKPA. With Soviet backing and prompting, Kim Il Sung and other contenders for power began implementing Communist policies that had already proven effective in Eastern Europe. On 5 March 1946 Kim's Provisional People's Committee passed a Land Reform Act that "completely dissolved" the traditional Korean ruling class, the landowners and local governing officials, and placed them at the mercy of peasant farmers.[10]

That legislation constituted the first step of a social restructuring within the north and the initial phase in the later forming of collective farms. Increased agricultural 'taxes' and inflated assessments then tied the rural farmers to support of government policies by forcing them to pay up to 70 percent of their crops to the government. Furthermore, in 1947, nationalization placed "over 90 percent of industry's 1,034 important factories and businesses" under direct control of the government. A succession of national conscription acts then inducted most young men into either the highly regimented NKPA or in forced labor projects. Religious organizations and oppositional political parties were persecuted through widespread extra-judicial jailing or executing of anti-Communist or pro-democracy leaders and supporters. All of these policies elevated trusted Korean peasants to positions of authority while demeaning the educated and/or skilled middle and upper-classes. As power began to concentrate around charismatic Koreans like Kim Il Sung, they employed their popularity to further purge rivals, punish protesters, and hold tightly the reins of power.[11]



Communist leader Kim Il Sung lectures farmers from Kangso *Gun* (County), South Pyongan Province in North Korea, October 1945.

Key Leaders at a Glance



Syngman Rhee

Born: 26 April 1875, Korea
Died: 19 July 1965, Hawaii

- Ultra-Conservative, anti-Communist Korean Nationalist.
- Educated in U.S., received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Princeton, socially/politically active with U.S. Presidents, politicians, military leaders.
- MacArthur's choice to run post-WWII Korea. Used anti-Communist stance to persecute leftist rivals to his candidacy to lead the new Korean nation. Won a 1948 UN-sponsored election as first President of the Republic of Korea (ROK).
- Built a weak, constabulary Army with limited support of U.S. No armor or air support.
- Wanted a reunified Korea under his ideological rule.
- During Korean War, he turned the ROK military over to GEN MacArthur and the UN Command. Used U.S. Psywar capabilities to push his message during the war.
- Opposed negotiations that divided Korea, and refused to sign the Armistice.
- Post-Armistice, Rhee consolidated power, held ROK presidency until large-scale protests in 1960.



Kim Il Sung

Born: 15 April 1912, Korea
Died: 8 July 1994, N. Korea

- Marxist, Communist Korean Nationalist.
- Educated in Communist Chinese schools and Soviet Academies. Trusted by prominent Communist Chinese and Soviet leaders. Led Communist Party in Korea.
- Stalin's pick to run post-WWII Korea. Soviet advisors selected him as chairman of People's Committee. Used land reform, taxation, business seizures, and purges as a means of tightening his control over North Koreans.
- Created a strong, capable, combat-tested Army. Soviets provided armor and air support.
- Wanted a reunified Korea under his ideological rule.
- Convinced Stalin he could win a quick war to reunify Korea. Initially very successful, but U.S. and UN support pushed his army back. Chinese intervention led to stalemate in the war.
- Initially opposed Armistice negotiations, but signed. Then supported insurgency in ROK.
- Forged absolute control over the people and culture. Created a cult of personality now in its 3rd generation of family rule.



Mao Zedong

Born: 26 Dec. 1893, China
Died: 9 Sept. 1976, China

- Developed his own Communist philosophy, known as Maoism.
- Educated at Marxist Beijing University. Led the 'Long March.' Fought Chiang Kai Shek and Japan. Led the Communist Party in China.
- Helped organize the Red Army and promoted guerrilla warfare against the Japanese. Forged close ties with the Soviet Union. After WWII, Mao's Army defeated the Nationalists and founded the People's Republic of China.
- Distrustful of the West, Mao maintained his People's Liberation Army.
- Desired a non-threatening Korean buffer state.
- Kim Il Sung convinced Mao that Stalin wanted his NKPA to attack the ROK. When the situation turned bad for North Korea, Mao attempted to warn off the UN, but then intervened.
- Wanted to maintain North Korea as a buffer state. Guided the Armistice to achieve that.
- Mao initiated his 'Great Leap Forward,' and the Cultural Revolution. Both were costly failures resulting in many deaths.



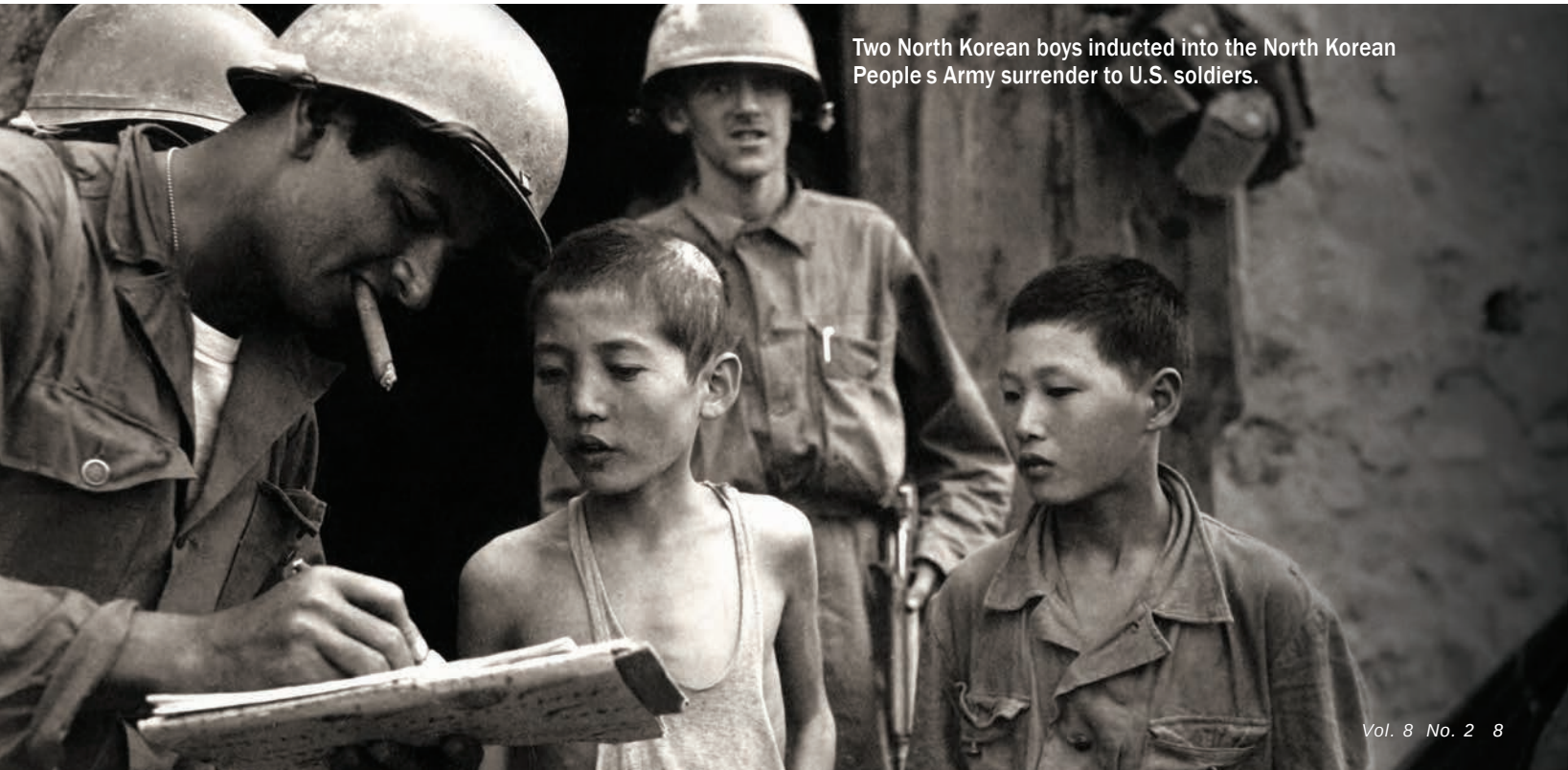
Soviet-North Korean military cooperation - Kim Il Sung pins a decoration on Soviet General Nikolai G. Lebedev, P'yongyang, North Korea, 1948.

The North Korean government harshly suppressed dissent and further tightened controls over its citizens. These measures in turn prompted some to challenge governmental authority. The more the Communists clamped down, the more these dissenters pushed back. Millions 'voted with their feet.' One American official reported that "Russian Occupation is forcing thousands of Koreans and Japanese to flee southward toward the American zone."[12] By "allowing the exodus of those who opposed Soviet occupation policies (primarily large landowners, Christians, and Koreans who had collaborated with the Japanese) [this simplified] the process of establishing political control" in North Korea, even though the resultant 'brain drain' reduced the numbers of skilled persons.[13]

However, not everyone who stayed complied with the escalating authoritarianism of the Communist government; many refused to leave and decided instead to *resist*. Some viewed the imposition of Communist ideals as another form of foreign influence in Korean affairs, like the despised Japanese occupation.[14] The Soviet presence in Korea only reinforced that perception. In some of the more remote regions of the north, anti-Communist movements formed around religious, educational, and trade organizations. And the more the groups resisted, the harder the local Communist leaders cracked down causing a vicious cycle of oppression. Some of the more hardened protesters and draft evaders fled to the remote, rugged mountains to avoid arrest, imprisonment, or injury.[15] Pak Choll, a future guerrilla leader, "kept up [his] anti-Communist uprisings and was put in jail for 3-1/2 months," causing him to be more clandestine in his activities afterward.[16] A small core of resisters took a more direct approach by physically attacking tax collectors, police, government officials, and draft enforcers. These early anti-Communist resistance elements became the heart of the guerrilla organizations that would later fight under the United Nations flag.

The sudden surge of the NKPA's full-scale assault on the south in the wake of Kim Il Sung's invasion on 25 June 1950 left Communist officials in rural areas without the full protection of military forces. By the end of September, with the NKPA in full retreat as a result of General (GEN) Douglas A. MacArthur's decisive amphibious assault at Inch'on and the breakout of UN forces from Pusan, many opponents of Communism believed that an opportunity to take action had arrived. In areas of the north outside of the NKPA's retreat routes, few military forces remained to support Communist Party agendas. Boys and men who had been forced into NKPA service surrendered to the first UN soldiers they encountered and the remainder of the North's army retreated toward China and the Soviet Union. As a result, some local Party leaders were left exposed for the first time to the direct wrath of the people who suffered under their rule.[17]

As the Allied forces surged north, some military leaders were surprised to discover that anti-Communist North Koreans had already taken matters into their own hands and liberated their districts. Pockets of disaffected North Koreans formed paramilitary units and chased Kim



Two North Korean boys inducted into the North Korean People s Army surrender to U.S. soldiers.

"Why I Fought the Communists"

The American advisor to one partisan group characterized the guerrillas as hard fighting and fiercely independent people. He noted that "they have had personal experiences of life under Communist rule and have a lot to fight for, since their homes are in North Korea in the hands of the enemy." He observed that their ages ranged from 17 to 26 years old, and that most of the partisan leaders were older, and that many had been community leaders before becoming full-time resistance fighters.[1] Their stories give insight into what motivated them to fight the Communists.

Teacher and schoolmaster Lee Jung Hok related how he and his entire class of eighty [North Korean] High School students were "not enjoying 'good' social status from the Communist viewpoint." The police kept Lee under constant surveillance and jailed him for a month for educating youth. To complicate matters, his home district in the Ongjin Peninsula sat astride the 38th Parallel and was jointly occupied by both the North and South Korean military before the war. Some of Lee's class had received training by the ROK 17th Regiment and after the war started the NKPA took particular vengeance on them, causing many to flee the Communists. Eventually the class formed a guerrilla unit under Lee's command that later operated from one of the partisan-held islands off Korea's west coast.[2]

Kim Ung Soo, a teacher at a Catholic school, reported that the police jailed him frequently because of his religion and his position as an educator, eventually forcing him to flee south in April 1947 to avoid persecution. He made his way home when the war started and became a guerrilla leader intent on freeing his family and farm.[3]

The North Korean Communist Party imprisoned Kim Chang Song for three years for organizing protest movements. After his release he hid in the mountains with several others to avoid the draft. In addition to feeding and supporting the fugitives, Kim formed an underground militia unit and convinced village doctors and town officials to exempt fellow anti-Communists from the draft by certifying them unfit for service. He also became a guerrilla leader.[4]



North Korean guerrilla leader, 1953.



Guerrilla leader oversees weapons training on one of the western islands.

In late 1945, Lim Jong Duk joined a North Korean anti-Communist opposition party and "went underground . . . under the Communist regime." Along with members of the North Korean Youth Group, they "resisted the Communist government in every way." Working clandestinely, Lim and others hoarded weapons and ambushed police and Communist Party officials. They organized student groups in schools, distributed anti-Communist propaganda, and helped draft evaders seek refuge in remote camps. They also facilitated the escape of fugitives to the south and communicated with pro-democracy organizations there.[5]

Although individual motivations for opposing Communism varied, by the end of 1950 those feelings brought most resisters together so that they were united in their fight against Kim Il Sung's forces. Always on their mind was the forlorn hope that a renewal of the UN offensive would provide them with the opportunity to again free their homeland.



Three North Korean guerrillas on one of the western islands. The coast of North Korea's Hwanghae Peninsula is visible in the background.

Endnotes

1 "Project SPOOK," Interview of 2d Lt. (2LT) William O. Watson, Jr., 2 November 1952, by LTC A. S. Daley and MAJ B. C. Mossman, included in 8086th Army Unit, (AFFE) Military History Detachment-3, "UN Partisan Forces in the Korean Conflict, 1951-1952," Project MHD-3, Center of Military History, Fort Belvoir, VA, (hereafter "UN Partisan Forces"), 128-39, quote from 133.

2 "The Narrative of Mr. Lee Jung Hok, Leader of Donkey 11, 'The Students'," interviewed by LTC A.S. Daley and MAJ B.C. Mossman, 3 November 1952, in "UN Partisan Forces," 73-86, quote from 74; Lee Jung Hok, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson and Douglas C. Dillard, 5 November 2003, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

3 "The Narrative of Mr. Kim Ung Soo, Leader of Donkey 15," in "UN Partisan Forces," 97-109.

4 "The Narrative of Mr. Kim Chang Song, Leader of Donkey 13," in "UN Partisan Forces," 87-96.

5 "The Narrative of Mr. Lim Jong Duk, Sub-Leader, and Mr. Lee Byong Gun, Chief of Staff, Donkey 20," in "UN Partisan Forces," 110-14, quotes from 110.

Il Sung's police and military forces away. These anti-Communist partisans welcomed the UN troops and even helped them locate, attack, and harass retreating NKPA elements.[18] Guerrillas like Kim Chang Song recalled that he contemplated "about what we should do to meet [the UN troops and join the] fight against Communism."[19] Making his move, "I had my people ambush each important [enemy] place." They burned police stations to the ground with Molotov cocktails and destroyed several other military outposts.[20] "We killed every Communist we found" and seized control of the district.[21]

By liberating themselves, the guerrillas inadvertently joined the Allied fight, but did so *conditionally*. Although the irregulars expressed contempt for Kim Il Sung's Communists, they felt equal disdain for Syngman Rhee and his ROK government. Most wanted nothing more than to consolidate their newly regained freedom and enjoy some autonomy over their affairs without interference from both the North and South Korean governments. In areas like the mountainous Hwanghae region in the west, many of these rebels had fought long and hard to restore their control over their communities and lives.[22]

Unfortunately for the resistance members, the massive Chinese intervention in November 1950 ended their hopes for autonomy. Chinese formations quickly pushed the Allied troops out of North Korea. Faced with an untenable situation, tens of thousands of peasants chose to leave for the south; yet some decided to remain in the north and fight as guerrillas. In the more remote regions like Hwanghae and Pyongan, these anti-Communist fighters still controlled sizeable areas behind the lines of battle. In other locales, "semi-organized and partly armed" civilians fled to the numerous western islands off North Korea to continue their fight.[23]

The Allied naval blockade, its air superiority, and a lack of enemy landing craft made the islands safe for guerrillas and refugees alike. According to a contemporary study, "an exodus [of guerrillas] began in December [1950], reached the proportions of a mass flight, and ended on January 1951 when the Communists managed to gain the upper hand and close the [land] exits." Left with few options, more than 10,000 lightly-armed irregulars and their families continued the fight from the islands. Refugees not interested in fighting hoped that the UN would return to free their villages and enable them to go home.[24]

In the winter of 1950/51, UN forces blunted the combined Communist Chinese and North Korean offensive. Allied planners began considering options to reunify the peninsula and factored the potential combat power of the partisan North Koreans behind the enemy lines into their plans. As one contemporary study noted, "a number of remote little islands in the Yellow Sea, unnoticed before . . . suddenly had become last-stand strongholds of North Korean antagonists to the Communist regime."[25] One EUSA officer concluded: "These volunteers have organized themselves, appointed leaders and, by virtue of their own initiative, have overcome numerous hardships while effectively combating [the enemy] and securing intelligence." He also asserted that "These groups possess



Map depicting the location of the Hwanghae region in North Korea.



North Korean refugees in P'yongyang await evacuation to South Korea.

the will to resist, and if supplied, organized, and properly employed, would form the nucleus of an ever-growing liability to the Communist Forces."[26] How to get them committed to the UN effort remained to be seen.

That recaps the partisan situation at the end of 1950. Soon, EUSA received reports that large numbers of armed North Korean civilians occupied many of the offshore islands to the north and west. The same sources said they were engaging Communist forces and wanted UN support. The ROK Army and Navy did not trust the North Koreans and asked the U.S. Army to take charge of the situation. The EUSA G3 accepted the mission to train and direct the guerrilla war effort. "The problem was how to convert these untrained and [largely] unarmed volunteers into an effective fighting force and adapt their capabilities to missions advantageous to the over-all operations against the enemy."[27]

EUSA had to create a guerrilla command to logistically support the partisan units, to provide basic infantry training, to support their operations with air and naval power, and to integrate their activities with the UNC. Fortunately, Colonel (COL) John H. McGee was an experienced guerrilla and special operations leader. He was capable of organizing and leading such a command. How COL McGee accomplished this mission is addressed in the following article.

Michael Krivdo earned his PhD in Military and Diplomatic History from Texas A&M University. He is a former Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance Officer with varied special operations research interests.

Endnotes

1 8086th Army Unit, (AFFE) Military History Detachment-3, "UN Partisan Forces in the Korean Conflict, 1951-1952," Project MHD-3, Center of Military History, Fort McNair, DC, (hereafter "UN Partisan Forces"), 10.

2 Roy E. Appleman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*. (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1961), 488-514, 607-09, 614-21; Billy C. Mossman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Ebb and Flow, November 1950 – July 1951*. ([1990]; Reprinted, Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2000), 229-30; "The Narrative of Mr. Kim Chang Song, Leader of Donkey 13," Interview, 3 November 1952, by LTC A. S. Daley and MAJ B[illy]. C. Mossman, included in "UN Partisan Forces," 87-96.

3 "The Narrative of Mr. Kim Chang Song," in "UN Partisan Forces," 87-96.

4 See Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), "Soviet Declaration of War on Japan," London, United Kingdom, 8 August 1945, available on the Internet at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/s4.asp, last accessed on 21 February 2012. During the Yalta Conference (4-11 February 1945), President Franklin D. Roosevelt and United Kingdom Prime Minister Winston Churchill agreed the "pre-eminent interests of the Soviet Union shall be safeguarded" with respect to the key harbors of Port Arthur and Darien in China and the Chinese-Eastern and South Manchurian Railroads, giving the Soviet Union major advantages over other allied nations in that region. In return, the Soviets promised they would declare war against Japan no more than 90 days after the surrender of Germany. The USSR also gained control over the Kurile Islands in Northern Japan (the USSR ceded those islands to Japan in 1904 following its defeat in the Russo-Japanese War). "Protocol of the Proceedings of the Crimean Conference," February 1945, reprinted at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/yalta.asp, accessed on 8 July 2012, quote from text.

5 "General Order No. 1" and "Revision of General Order No. 1," Washington, DC, 11 August 1945, reprinted in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, Vol. 6, 1945, *The British Commonwealth, The Far East* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1969) (hereafter *FRUS*), 507-12, 635-39.

6 With the forced signing by Korean Emperor Sunjong of the "Japan-Korea Treaty of 1910," the Japanese annexed Korea and administered it as a dependent colony until September 1945, when Japanese troops surrendered to forces of the United States and the Soviet Union. In the absence of a viable national government, the occupying nations performed those functions until a new Korean-led government could be established.

7 "Revision of General Order No. 1," Washington, DC, 11 August 1945, reprinted in *FRUS* 6, 1945, 636; and Charles W. McCarthy, Secretary, "Memorandum by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee to Brigadier General Andrew J. McFarland, Secretary of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," Washington, DC, 24 August 1945, *FRUS* 6, 1945, 1040.

8 During the Yalta Conference in February 1945, the United Kingdom and United States agreed to grant certain concessions ("Agreement Regarding Japan," 11 February 1945) to the USSR should it enter the war against Japan. However, unlike the division of Germany (also agreed at Yalta), the USSR would not administer any portion of a divided Japan. Instead, the three parties accepted the temporary division and also established a joint commission "to assist the formation of a provisional Korean government" (Agreement, "Interim Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," Moscow, December 16-26). Rather than reunify, the governments of both North and South Korea moved further from one another politically, each hoping to eventually reunite the peninsula under their own particular political system.

9 United Nations, "The Problem of the Independence of Korea," December 12, 1948, A/RES/195 (III), *Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly during its Third Session*, 25-27, available on the Internet at: http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/r3.htm, last accessed on 21 February 2012. That same resolution declares the Republic of Korea a "lawful government," and also the "only such Government in Korea" by virtue of the results of the UN supervised elections held earlier that year (A/RES/195 [III], quotes from 25). For information on PMAG and its successor unit, the Korean Military Advisor Group (KMAG), see Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 8, 18, 35; Robert Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in War and Peace* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1962), 8-45; and John D. Tabb, "The Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG): A Model for Success?," School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 17-28. Although PMAG later grew in numbers and even became the more robust KMAG, the few U.S. military that were authorized in PMAG when the ROK became independent illustrates how small the US military presence had become by the Fall of 1948.

10 United Nations, "Report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK)," (A/1881) (Supp) (hereafter UNCURK A/1881 Report), 27-28; Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea: From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 91-92, 94-97; Jae Jean Suh, "The Transformation of Class Structure and Class Conflict in North Korea," *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies* 14:2 (2005), 52-84, quote from 56.

11 Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea*, 94-97; Suh, "Class Structure and Class Conflict in North Korea," 52-84, quote from 56.

12 John Carter Vincent, "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs to the Under Secretary of State," Washington, DC, 1 October 1945, in *FRUS* 6, 1945, 1066-67, quote from 1067; *FRUS* 6, 1945, 1144-48; Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945-1950* (Cornell, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 45-47; Kathryn Weathersby, "Soviet Aims in Korea and the Origins of the Korean War, 1945-1950: New Evidence from Russian Archives," Cold War International History Project (CWIHP), Woodrow Wilson Center, Working Paper No. 8 (November 1993), 13; United Nations, "Report of the United Nations Commission on Korea [UNCOK]," Vol. 2, Annexes, (A/939/Add. 1), 7-8. The historical record reveals that the numbers of Koreans relocating to the south increased rapidly with the tightening of Communist control. Armstrong notes that "by December 1945, the U.S. occupation authorities had recorded nearly half a million Koreans entering the American zone," (Armstrong, 47). Another source asserts that by mid-December "Entry into our Zone of an additional 1,600,000 refugees" meant that "Three-quarters of the population of Korea is now in our hands" ("The Acting Political Adviser in Korea to the Secretary of State," Seoul, [Republic of Korea,] 14 December 1945, in *FRUS* 6, 1945, 1142-44, quotes from 1142 and 1143, respectively). Not all were fleeing Communist oppression, but significant numbers were and the population shift remained predominantly north to south for the next five years.

13 Weathersby, "Soviet Aims in Korea and the Origins of the Korean War, 1945-1950," 13.

14 According to the UNCURK A/1881 Report, 28: "Although land reform in North Korea may have been enthusiastically welcomed at the time of its inauguration, disillusionment among the farmers quickly followed. There is a difference of opinion whether the conditions of the former tenants were better following the land reform than under the Japanese regime. *For the most part, it would appear that there was merely a substitution of the Communist authorities for the former landlords*" (emphasis added).

15 For example, see Kim Jae Seol, *War History of the Kuwolsan Guerrilla Unit* (Seoul: Kuwolsan Guerrilla Unit Comrade Association, 2002), 39-42 (copy in History Support Center, Fort Bragg, NC), for personal accounts of the hardships imposed by Communist officials between 1945 and 1950. Another good source is the aforementioned "UN Partisan Forces," and Frederick W. Cleaver, George Fitzpatrick, John Ponturo, *et al*., "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea, 1951-1954," AFFE Group Technical Memorandum ORO-T-64, Johns Hopkins University, Operations Research Office, June 1956 (hereafter ORO Study), *passim*.

16 "The Narrative of Mr. Pak Choll, Leader of Donkey 4," interviewed by LTC A.S. Daley and MAJ B. C. Mossman, 3 November 1952, in "UN Partisan Forces," 56-72, quote from 56.

17 ORO Study, 29.

18 Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 488-514, 607-09, 614-21; ORO Study, 29.

19 "Narrative of Mr. Kim Chang Song, Leader of Donkey 13," interviewed by LTC A.S. Daley and MAJ B.C. Mossman, 3 November 1952, in "UN Partisan Forces," 87-93, quotes from 87.

20 "Narrative of Mr. Kim Chang Song," in "UN Partisan Forces," 87-93, quote from 90.

21 "Narrative of Mr. Kim Chang Song," in "UN Partisan Forces," 87-93, quote from 92.

22 "UN Partisan Forces," 87-93; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 229-30. For much of the war, Syngman Rhee and his officers viewed most of the partisans with suspicion. Being mostly citizens of North Korea, ROK leaders were content to allow the EUSA and UNC to administer and care for the partisans rather than risk inducting them wholesale into the ROK Army. For their part, the partisans felt the same way; few expressed any interest in serving in the ROK military until it became apparent late in the war that there was little chance of a renewed UN offensive that would allow them to return to their homes.

23 ORO Study, 7-8, 29-31, quote from 29; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 229-30.

24 "UN Partisan Forces," 3-5, quote from 4.

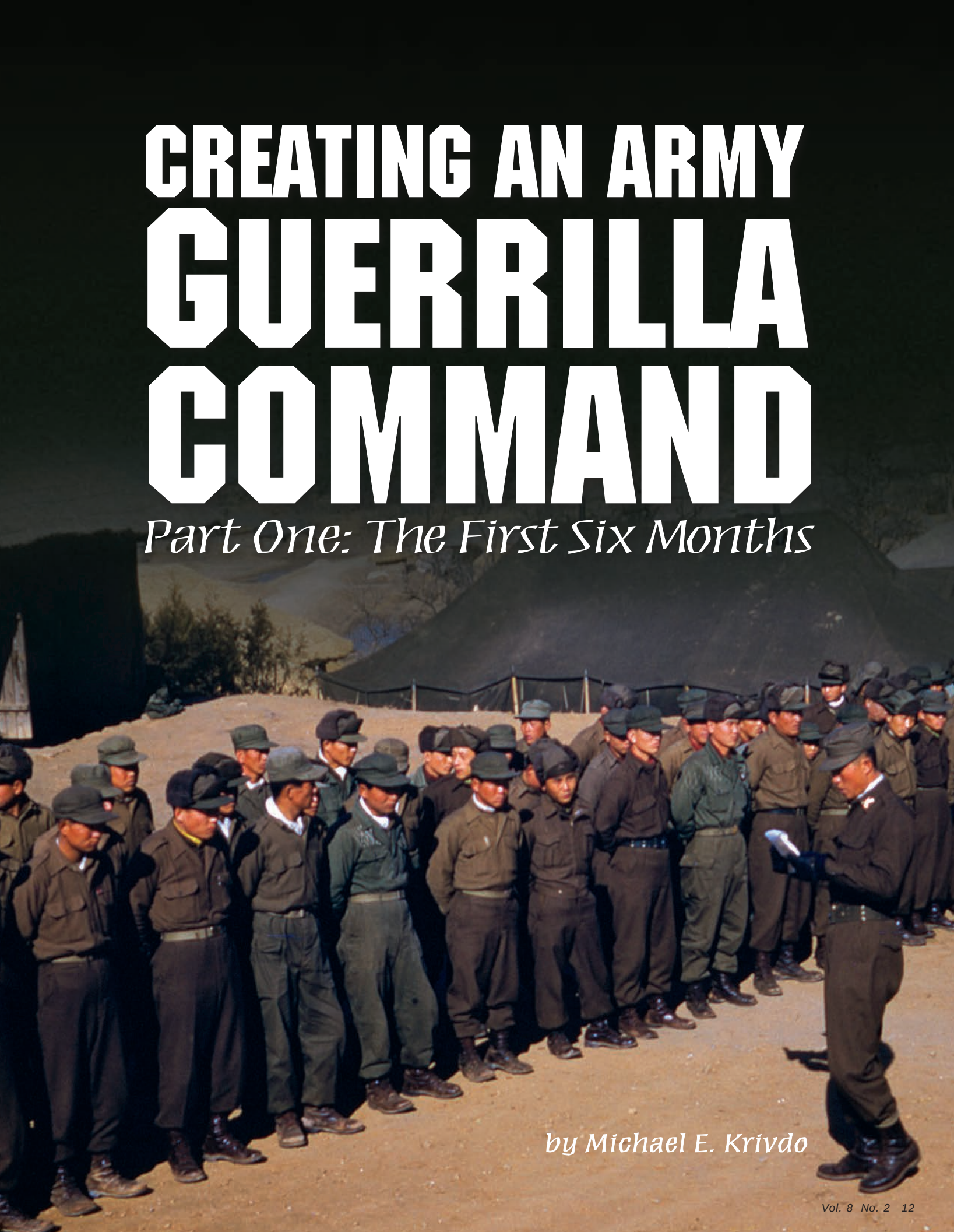
25 ORO Study, 30-31; Quote from "UN Partisan Forces," 10.

26 Major William A. Burke, "Report on Korean Volunteer Groups Operating on the Hwanghae Peninsula," 20 January 1951, copy in "UN Partisan Forces," 31-32, quotes from 31.

27 ORO Study, 30-31; Quote from "UN Partisan Forces," 10.

CREATING AN ARMY GUERRILLA COMMAND

Part One: The First Six Months



by Michael E. Krivdo

"A partisan strength of 25,000, well-led and properly trained, could be expected to divert from 375,000 to 500,000 regular troops from other duties necessary to a successful prosecution of the war."[1]

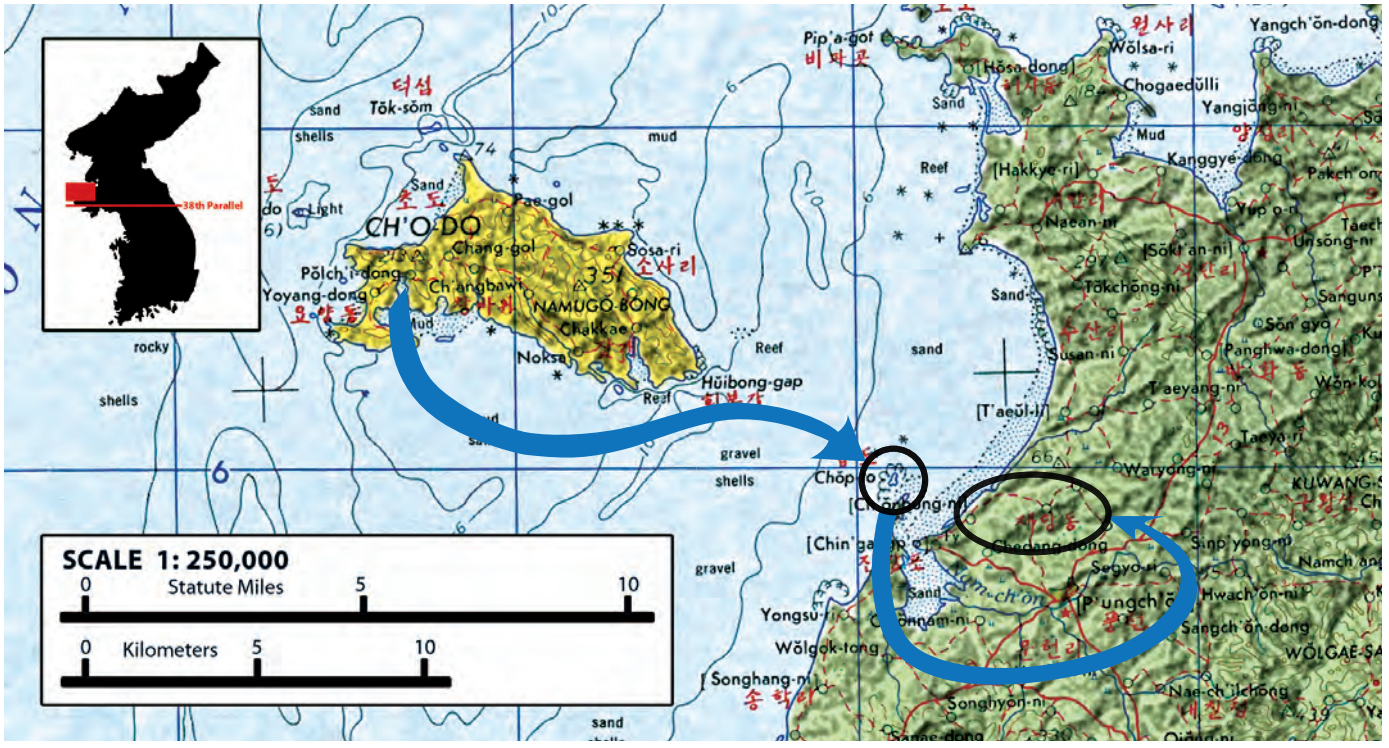
About 2000 hours on 29 March 1953, a small flotilla of fishing vessels emerged out of a hazy, moonless night and scraped over a cold gravel beach on Chop-to, a tiny island a few hundred meters off the west coast of North Korea. A hundred shadowy figures disembarked and moved silently into the scrub and trees above the beach. Seventeen guerrillas guarding the beach landing site (BLS) pushed the boats back out to sea to await the return of the raiding party. The main party quickly moved to their target, a North Korean People's Army (NKPA) battalion command post. The raiders, guided by friendly agents who had reconnoitered the area, slipped across a rocky sand spit connecting Chop-to to the mainland and moved inland. By the time the sun rose, the partisans were hidden in thick brush observing their target in the distance.[2]

When darkness fell again, the guerrillas moved silently into designated assault positions. They remained undetected. On signal the partisans rushed forward to quickly overwhelm the enemy. They inflicted numerous casualties and captured an NKPA major and a sergeant. Dragging their prisoners along, the partisans melted into the night and withdrew. At the BLS they recalled their boats and got aboard. As the mixed flotilla of fishing boats departed for their base camp on Cho-do, five miles away, pre-arranged Allied aircraft missions and naval gunfire covered their withdrawal by disrupting enemy counterattacks. In this successful action the guerrillas lost five men and had two wounded, yet inflicted many more casualties on the enemy and reinforced the constant threat of attack. Moreover, the raid demonstrated to the populace that resistance to Communist rule continued.[3]

Few modern military campaigns have been as misunderstood and misrepresented as the U.S. Army's first deliberate attempt to create an *ad hoc* guerrilla command to support and coordinate the actions of North Korean anti-Communist guerrillas in support of the United Nations (UN) in Korea. Much mythology has cloaked this effort and historical inaccuracies, misidentifications,



Dusk boat movement of North Korean guerrillas.



Cho-do and Chop-to islands, and the site of the guerrilla raid.

and unsubstantiated accounts predominate to the point of becoming 'facts.' Why and how did this happen? Long-standing security classification of activities; numerous name changes and structural reorganizations; little documentation to substantiate activities and results; and constant evolution of operations peripheral to the main UN effort are all contributing factors. And to compound matters, other services, agencies, the Republic of Korea (ROK) military, and some UN allies simultaneously worked with North Korean irregulars. Partisan warfare was also complicated by language barriers and the establishment of separate reporting chains that encouraged embellishment of accomplishments and discouraged independent verification and analysis of results.

This study tackles the confusion of guerrilla warfare in Korea and presents the difficulties of advising, training, assisting, and commanding North Korean partisans. The evolving organizational history reveals the growth, functional changes, and command direction during its critical first six months of operation. But why are the activities of this guerrilla command relevant to Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) soldiers today? It is the Army's first attempt to deliberately create a command to conduct guerrilla warfare. Toward the end of the conflict this wartime effort will be supported by Army Special Forces trained soldiers. Reviewing how the guerrilla command came to be formed, how its missions evolved, the operational difficulties encountered, and its accomplishments and failures will allow the reader to assess the validity and value of the organization. Because there was so much mythology associated with guerrilla warfare in Korea, the U.S. Army stumbled through Vietnam as well.

Resistance to Communism in North Korea prompted the formation of anti-Communist paramilitary organizations. It began with the advance of UN forces into North Korea. The ousting of Communist officials ended in late 1950 when hundreds of thousands of Communist Chinese Forces (CCF) forced the withdrawal of UN units. Left unsupported, the anti-Communists fled their villages for remote areas and offshore islands that provided them with a degree of security to continue their fight. By early 1951, reports filtered in that several thousand lightly-armed guerrillas were conducting small-scale raids against North Korean targets. As the UN prepared to counter the CCF offensive, some military leaders suggested that the guerrillas be incorporated in that allied effort. They posited that combat power of the partisans behind the enemy lines, properly led, would reduce pressure on the main battle lines. Suddenly, "a number of remote little islands in the Yellow Sea, unnoticed . . . last-stand strongholds of North Korean antagonists to the Communist regime," had potential value.[4]

To verify that conclusion, the Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) headquarters dispatched Major (MAJ) William A. Burke, a decorated WWII armor officer, to the islands. Burke reported, "These volunteers have organized themselves, appointed leaders and, by virtue of their own initiative, have overcome numerous hardships while effectively combating [the enemy] and securing intelligence." He believed that "these groups possess the will to resist, and if supplied, organized, and properly employed, would form the nucleus of an ever-growing liability to the Communist Forces."[5]

This field grade officer's assessment convinced EUSA planners to add the guerrillas to the UN effort. The necessity to impose some command and control over the scattered, independent partisan groups was realized. Otherwise, their operations might prove counterproductive to the major war effort. The crux of "the problem was how to convert these untrained and [largely] unarmed volunteers into an effective fighting force and adapt their capabilities to missions advantageous to the over-all operations against the enemy."[6] It became obvious that a guerrilla command had to be formed to provide logistical support, coordinate training, and to integrate the partisans' activities into the UN campaign.

How should this guerrilla command be organized, led and directed? A guerrilla war was a new challenge for the U.S. Army. That type of warfare and the environment were totally different than that encountered in Europe during WWII. The ROK government demonstrated no interest in North Korean anti-Communist guerrillas because they considered them politically unreliable. The Far East Command (FEC) in Japan focused on bigger issues. By default, the EUSA staff got the guerrilla warfare mission. Fortuitously, Colonel (COL) John H. McGee, a WWII Philippine veteran with guerrilla experience, was the EUSA G-3 "Miscellaneous Duties" officer. He had

Miscellaneous Division, Eighth U.S. Army

Guerrilla Command:

(Attrition Section, 15 January to 4 May 1951; 8086th AU, 5 May to 9 December 1951; then becomes 8240th AU under FEC) Created to advise, train, assist, and command North Korean guerrillas.

Eighth Army Ranger Company:

(8213th AU) Created 25 August 1950 at Camp Drake, Japan. Assigned missions to infiltrate enemy lines and attack command posts, artillery, tank parks, and key communications centers or facilities.

Eighth Army Ranger Training Center:

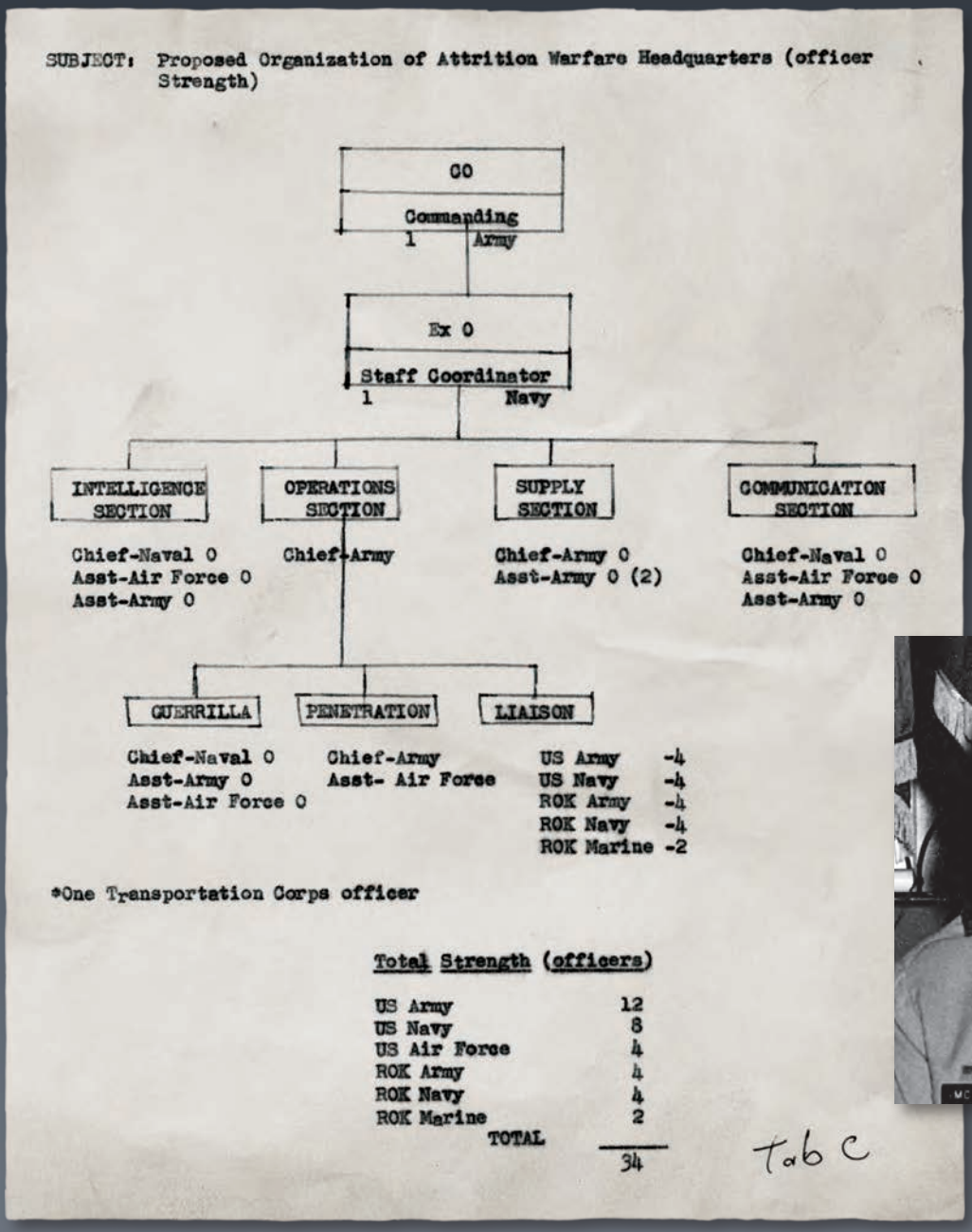
Created 15 August 1950 at Kijang, near Pusan, South Korea, to train Ranger units in the skills of infiltration, raids, reconnaissance and combat patrolling, and ambushes. After training the Eighth Army Ranger Company, the Ranger school trained South Korean units in Ranger tactics.

United Nations Reception Center:

(8212th AU) Formed 23 September 1950 at Taegu, ROK, to "clothe, equip, and provide familiarization training with U.S. Army weapons and equipment" for international troops arriving in Korea.

been assigned to every 'special' or unconventional project since August 1950.[7] McGee had created, organized, and fielded the GHQ Raider Company and the Eighth Army Ranger Company, and established and commanded a new Ranger Training Center near Pusan for the ROK Army on 15 August 1950. McGee also formed and commanded the UN Reception Center at Taegu to "clothe, equip, and provide familiarization training with U.S. Army weapons and equipment" to foreign contingents assigned to the UN. COL McGee first studied the North Korean guerrilla problem in September 1950 when he helped develop anti-guerrilla operations to neutralize pockets of North Korean soldiers and bandits inside the Pusan Perimeter. Later, after the breakout from the Perimeter, McGee focused on the elimination of enemy 'leakers' (deliberate stay behinds, infiltrators, and stragglers) bypassed during the UN charge into North Korea.[8] These experiences taught McGee how guerrilla units operated. Although his initial mission involved destroying guerrillas, solving that problem enabled him to understand how guerrillas operated and what their strengths and weaknesses were.

Not surprisingly, the EUSA commander gave COL McGee, the most qualified officer on his staff, the guerrilla command. By 13 January 1951, the WWII vet had submitted a plan to conduct "attrition warfare," his term to describe the desired effects of guerrilla operations. He recommended forming "a combined headquarters consisting of United States Army, Navy and Air Force and ROK Army and Navy liaison personnel" to accomplish


SUBJECT: Proposed Organization of Attrition Warfare Headquarters (officer Strength)

CO
Commanding
1 Army

Ex O
Staff Coordinator
1 Navy

INTELLIGENCE SECTION
Chief-Naval O
Asst-Air Force O
Asst-Army O

OPERATIONS SECTION
Chief-Army

SUPPLY SECTION
Chief-Army O
Asst-Army O (2)

COMMUNICATION SECTION
Chief-Naval O
Asst-Air Force O
Asst-Army O

GUERRILLA
Chief-Naval O
Asst-Army O
Asst-Air Force O

PENETRATION
Chief-Army
Asst- Air Force

LIAISON
US Army -4
US Navy -4
ROK Army -4
ROK Navy -4
ROK Marine -2

*One Transportation Corps officer

Total Strength (officers)

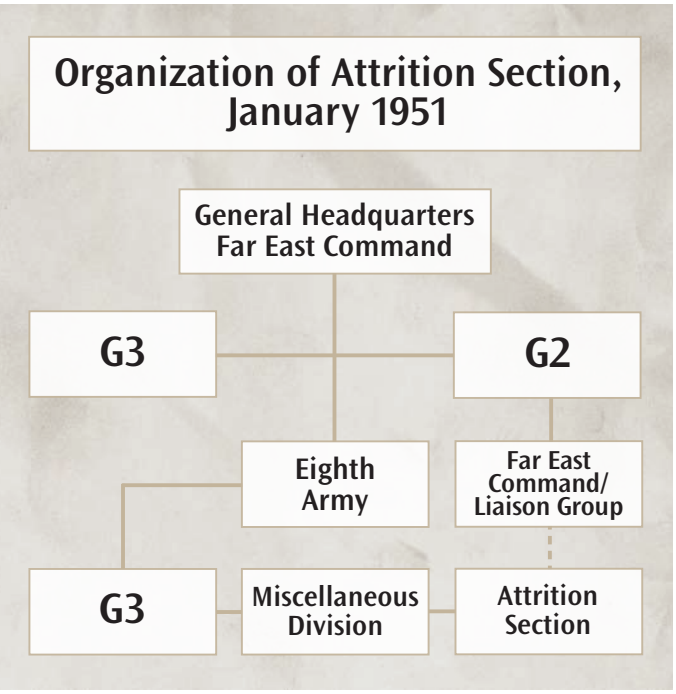
US Army	12
US Navy	8
US Air Force	4
ROK Army	4
ROK Navy	4
ROK Marine	2
TOTAL	34

Tab C

COL McGee s original proposal for the Table of Organization for the Attrition Section, Miscellaneous Division, 13 January 1951.



Brigadier General (BG) John Hugh McGee.



Initial command relationships of the Attrition Section, Miscellaneous Division, as formed on 23 January 1951.

this mission. Thus, McGee's "attrition" plan became the guide for command and control of guerrilla operations.[9]

Since McGee's proposal had a lasting impact on the conduct of guerrilla operations in Korea, it is important to place his organization in context. There were certain factors that McGee had to consider. First, personnel, supplies, and transportation were constrained; all units competed for them. Second, there were very few Army personnel in the Far East Command (FEC) trained or experienced in guerrilla warfare. McGee had to work with these constraints. Therefore, he chose to stay within the EUSA staff to get the command formed as quickly as possible. The more he had to coordinate with external commands, the more complicated it would be, reducing the chance of success. McGee hoped to streamline the decision-making process by accessing only those assets controlled by EUSA.

For the sake of expediency, COL McGee put his command under the staff supervision of the EUSA G-3. To enhance joint coordination he built a table of organization that had officers from all services. There was an Army commander (himself) and a Navy executive officer/staff coordinator with four staff sections: Intelligence, Operations, Supply, and Communications. Army officers headed the Operations and Supply sections and naval officers directed the Intelligence and Communications sections. Air Force officers were assistant section leaders in Intelligence and Communications sections because those sections would plan and supervise "all [guerrilla unit] operations to include the air dropping or placing ashore [in North Korea] of sabotage teams." Supply had to flexibly support "widely separated and varied operations by means of water and air," just as Communications ensured radio connectivity with the widely scattered elements.[10]

McGee divided his Operations Section into three elements: Guerrilla, Penetration, and Liaison. Led by a naval officer with an Army assistant, the Guerrilla Element planned partisan operations in support of the EUSA at the Corps level. Penetration, led by an Army officer with an Air Force assistant, planned insertions because air delivery was the preferred method. The Liaison Element had the largest contingent of officers (eighteen) in the command, reflecting the importance of coordination to conduct successful guerrilla operations. And since combined operations were envisioned, McGee planned for ten ROK Navy, Army and Marine officers to ensure proper "coordination of partisan effort when [they are] employed in support of an Eighth Army tactical unit."[11] His rationale was that "Landings, pickups, airdrops, air support and allied operations [demand] the highest cooperation and coordination at planning and operational levels." Furthermore, "Combined ground, naval and air [support] from a central integrated headquarters are necessary" for successful operations.[12] Unfortunately, McGee never got enough officers to fill all the liaison billets.

The impressive level of preparation and planning detail verified that McGee was the best-qualified person to lead the guerrilla command. Two days after McGee made his proposal, the Attrition Section of Miscellaneous Division was formed (15 January 1951). It was the first Army unit specifically created to conduct guerrilla operations.[13]

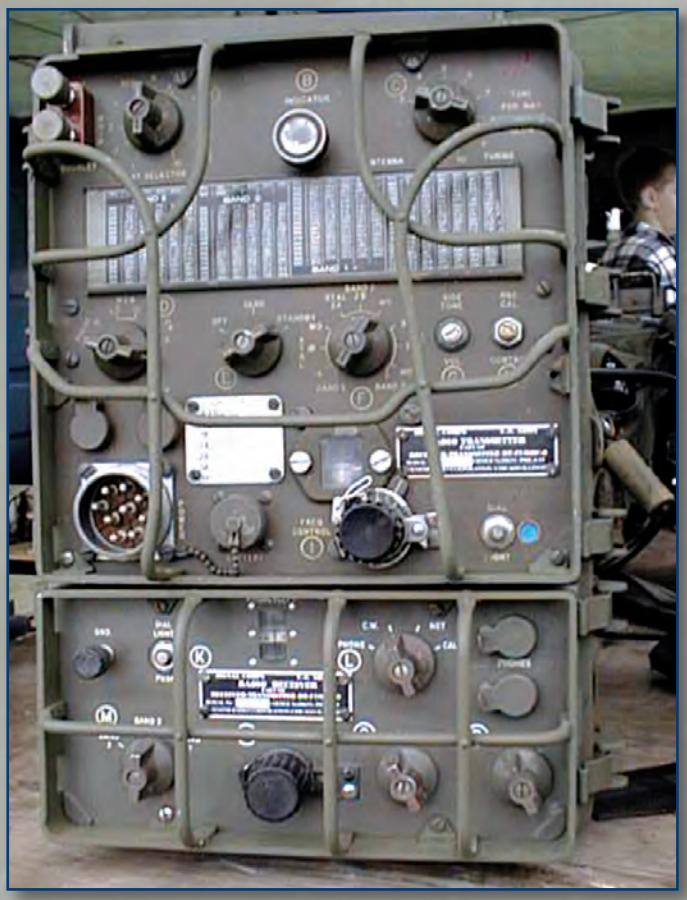
With authority in hand, COL McGee then identified and recruited soldiers to lead, train, and advise the 'Gs,' vigorously working his connections in the EUSA G-1. Since the talent pool of guerrilla warfare experts was very shallow, McGee sought out paratroopers, Rangers, and WWII Office of Strategic Services (OSS) veterans in EUSA. He judiciously screened cadre personnel at his UN Reception Center in Taegu and the Korean Ranger Training Center at Kijang, as well as the EUSA Signals Office.[14] With EUSA G-1 support, McGee began filling his staff and advising positions.

Concurrently, the 'many-hatted' colonel had to establish a central field operating base to bring the scattered partisan groups under control. He appointed his assistant, MAJ Burke, to command the guerrilla base for the western islands and tasked him to write a detailed organizational plan. A week later, Burke submitted an "Organization and Plan for Partisan Operations in Korea (Plan ABLE)." It specified how to run "covert type missions of sabotage and intelligence." Burke's concept was two-tiered with forward echelons located in the relatively secure islands off the North Korean coast. The internal ring consisted of a permanent 'base' in a secure location where guerrillas could be organized, trained and prepared for operations. The external ring consisted of 'mobile' guerrilla camps/sites located on outlying islands or on the mainland of North Korea. The guerrillas would train and rehearse for missions at the permanent base, then return to their mobile base to finalize details before launching attacks or raids against enemy targets.[15] This internal/external arrangement became the operational model for the guerrilla forces throughout the war.

Guerrilla Command
FIELD RADIOS AND COMMUNICATION

COL McGee's Plan ABLE specified that the U.S. Army provide each partisan unit with sufficient radio equipment to allow them to communicate from their mobile locations in North Korea to the American-led training base. The standardization of equipment helped minimize logistics and training issues. McGee's plan included two options for maintaining radio contact with the guerrilla units, depending on the tactical situation.

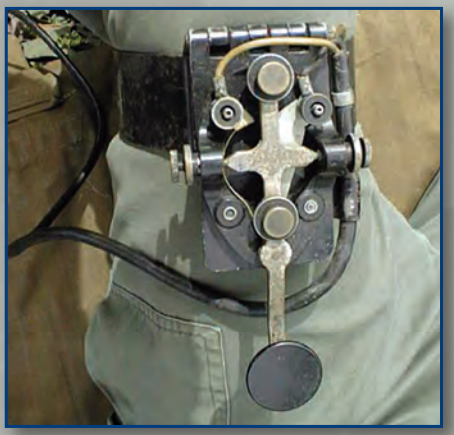
'Plan One' involved equipping the partisan units with radios that "will net with the *high-powered* radio on the [stationary, American-run] base." It presumed that "by using U.S. operators on these sets . . . adequate communications will be established under the most adverse conditions." 'Plan Two' entailed issuing the guerrillas "*low-powered* radio sets upon which they received training and are capable of operating." Those sets communicated on a separate guerrilla net terminating on the stationary fixed base. Eventually, Plan Two became McGee's preferred option although it meant establishing additional relay stations when covering deep guerrilla operations. Communications security was established by use of 'one-time pads' to encrypt message content. As a practical command and control measure McGee mandated that only U.S. personnel communicated directly with Allied ships



AN/GRC-9 'Angry 9' man-pack radio components (range about 10 miles voice, 30 miles continuous wave (CW) (Morse Code).



GN-58 hand-cranked generator for the AN/GRC-9.



CW, or Morse Code key for the AN/GRC-9 radio.

or planes or requested supporting arms, thereby keeping the authority for the control of those assets fully within American hands.[1]

In addition to establishing the practical feature of language commonality, the rule also meant that all requests for air or naval fire support passed through American hands where they could be approved or denied. Successive American guerrilla commanders continued that practice as a means of exercising direct control over guerrilla actions.

McGee's communication plan reflected his overall concept of forming "forward operational echelons" consisting of combinations of two types of organizations: Base and Mobile units. According to McGee, "The base unit is . . . [sited on] an off coast island base from which mainland operations [and training can be conducted]." The "mobile unit is a well trained and equipped organization, which is capable of establishing and maintaining an interior mainland base. The interior teams are provided for infiltration to distant groups for the purpose of coordination and control." As he envisioned it, the base unit sited on a relatively secure island could train, advise, and support several mobile units located on outlying islands closer to partisan home villages and districts. Meanwhile, the base unit (or units) could maintain contact with (and report to) McGee's rear echelon guerrilla command headquarters located with EUSA. A separate training command in a secure rear area conducted specialized training of "carefully selected Koreans in demolitions, communications and parachute jumping."[2] Although McGee's early planning focused mainly on establishing one base unit in Western Korea, others could be established later (if required) under the central control of McGee's headquarters, at that time co-located with EUSA Headquarters in Taegu.

Endnotes

1 Burke, "Plan ABLE," 36-38, quotes from 37, author's emphasis added; "Darragh Letter," 10-11; Ripley interview, 28 July 2011.

2 John H. McGee, Miscellaneous Division, G-3 Section, APO 301, "Study of Guerrilla Warfare in Korea," 10 April 1951, in "UN Partisan Forces," 75-76, quotes from 76.



Long range (within theater) SCR-399 HF base station.



(Above) Short range (about 3 miles) SCR 300 FM radio was carried by the Korean guerrillas.

Command responsibilities under Plan ABLE's two-tiered system:

The stationary Base site commander (American) was responsible for:

- **Establishing security for the base camp.**
- **Operating a primary, high-powered HF radio station to communicate with McGee's headquarters (at that time located in Taegu).**
- **Monitoring a second net to communicate with the guerrilla units in outlying 'G' mobile bases.**
- **Training the guerrillas in intelligence, communications, weapons, small unit tactics, logistics, and demolitions.**



Generic command organizational chart for stationary guerrilla bases under Plan ABLE *(Burke, "Plan ABLE," 33-41).*

The Mobile camp commander (Korean) was responsible for:

- **Establishing security of his site.**
- **Operating and monitoring a radio net to communicate with the American guerrilla leader's base camp.**
- **Continuing to train his guerrillas when in his mobile camp.**
- **Preparing for and conducting operations against the enemy.**
- **Reporting information back to the American guerrilla leader.**[16]



North Korean guerrillas moving mortar rounds out of the WOLFPACK ammunition bunker.



North Korean guerrillas conducting weapons training on one of the northwest islands.

Essentially, the permanent 'base' echelon was the regional headquarters, training, and supply hub that controlled the subordinate guerrilla units located on several 'mobile' bases nearer to the enemy. At this early stage in the war, many of the partisan groups still maintained close ties with people from their mainland villages and districts. Since the guerrillas operated independently with American advice, the permanent base commander had little direct control over the day-to-day running of the 'Gs.'[17]

Plan ABLE specified a basic guerrilla organization for the cadre and necessary skills for each partisan leader to establish standard levels of proficiency in all guerrilla units. For example, every unit commander (and at least four of his assistant leaders) was supposed to be trained in intelligence gathering, small unit tactics, supply and air drop procedures, and the employment of small arms and crew-served weapons. At least one assistant would be trained in the operation and maintenance of low-powered radio sets, and could give extra small arms instruction to his men. Sabotage techniques, demolitions, and advanced small arms techniques were mandated for other leaders.[18] Plan ABLE became the framework for a program of instruction supported by the American advisors/trainers.

McGee wanted Americans to teach basic soldier skills to the unit as a whole. Other instructors taught additional skills to leaders so that the Koreans could conduct advanced and sustainment training within their unit. It was a train-the-trainer approach except there were no Special Forces Operational Detachments to accomplish this. Completely overlooked was combat medical training, a deficiency not satisfactorily resolved during the Korean War.[19]

Less than a week after activating the Attrition Section, MAJ Burke and a small advance party arrived at Paengnyong-do to "establish a base . . . from which [guerrilla] operations on the Peninsula could be supported

and directed."[20] When their Landing Ship-Tank (LST) arrived, Burke discovered a ROK Marine unit guarding the island. COL McGee accompanied the main body to meet with the partisan leaders. He talked at length with forty guerrilla leaders and issued expectations. McGee also discussed training plans and promised periodic supplies of weapons, ammunition, and food. A stretch of flat beach on the southeastern side of Paengnyong Island would serve as a field strip for cargo aircraft. The base, initially called WILLIAM ABLE, was a relatively safe area for training 'G' units, who referred to themselves as 'Donkeys.'[21]

COL McGee coordinated with the United Nations Civil Assistance Command, Korea (UNCACK) for rice and clothing. By 15 March 1951, MAJ Burke had a fully functioning permanent base with "6,000 bags of rice . . . 1,000 bags of salt," and uniforms for issue to the guerrillas. EUSA also furnished the 'Gs' with five tons of enemy weapons and ammunition and three cases of medical supplies.[22]

Rations of salt and rice served as pay for the guerrillas while weapons, ammunition, and demolitions were incentives to conduct raids. As one American commander noted, "Rice is issued to Donkey Units based on the authorized strength and the amount on hand. It will not be issued to [units] who do not produce good operations and accurate enemy information."[23] Once started at WILLIAM ABLE Base, that practice persisted throughout the war with mixed results.

Origins of the term 'Donkeys'

The origins of the term 'Donkey' for identifying West Coast guerrilla units are unclear, but its use began early at WILLIAM ABLE Base. One probable origination is related to COL McGee's first speech to the guerrilla leaders on Paengnyong-do. In that meeting he advised them to not be rash, but instead "behave like the mule which [when entangled in wire] stubbornly, patiently awaits the arrival of outside help." His interpreter substituted the more familiar 'donkey' for mule, and the name apparently stuck. Another possible origin was put forward by an early Donkey leader who stated "the generator of the [AN/GRC-9] radio looked like a Korean donkey or ass. When you crank the generator . . . you have to ride on the generator which looks like a rider on the back of a donkey." Regardless of how the term originated, individual guerrilla units began referring to themselves after McGee's visit as 'Donkeys.' Units became identified as a numbered 'Donkey' (example: 'Donkey 6').

"Darragh Letter," 13; "UN Partisan Forces," 93-94; see also Kenneth Finlayson, "Wolfpacks and Donkeys: Special Forces Soldiers in the Korean War," *Veritas* 3, No. 3 (2007), 32-40.



Original overlay (Tab B) from McGee's "Attrition Warfare" plan of 13 January 1951 depicting the Hwanghae Peninsula with highlighted location of Paengnyong-do.

Meanwhile, seventeen square-mile Paengnyong island filled to overflowing as 12,000 refugees and guerrillas settled there. While it was a fertile recruiting ground, there was a significant challenge to feed the population. Operations commenced with fifteen partisan 'Donkey' units and WILLIAM ABLE Base became officially called LEOPARD Base. This was the first of many name changes, redesignations, and reorganizations that confused guerrilla command operations throughout the war. To exacerbate the situation, COL McGee and his other subordinate leaders kept creating special activities, sections, and subunits.[24]

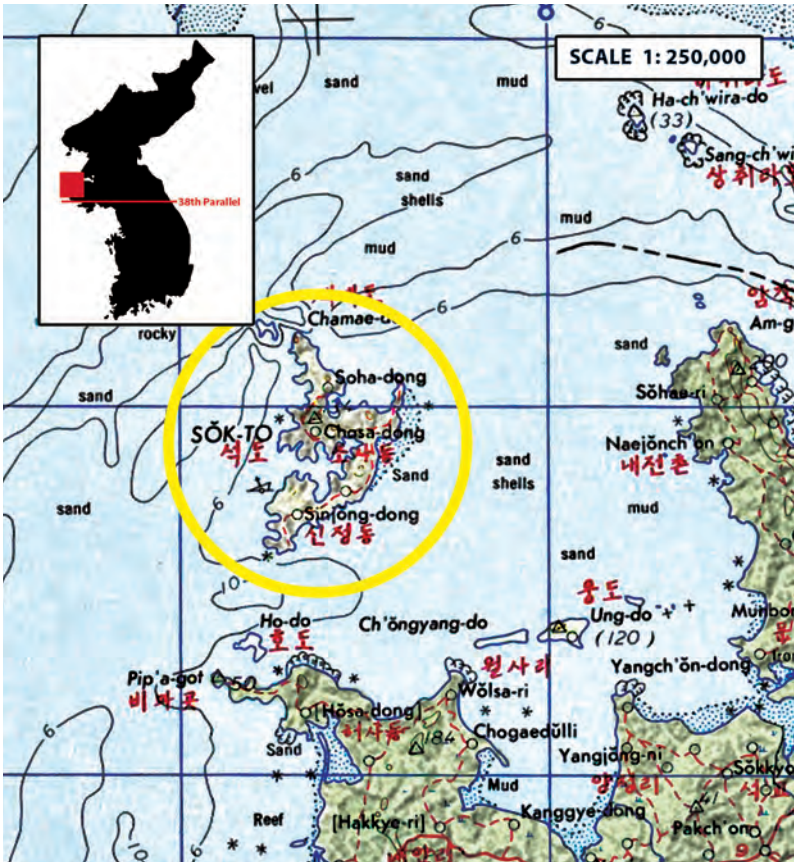
On 15 February 1951, the Attrition Section commander formed a special training unit called BAKER Section. He manned it with American instructors from the ROK Ranger course near the town of Kijang, just north of Pusan. McGee selected MAJ Eugene M. Perry, Jr., a regular Army maverick and warrior, to command BAKER Section. With a college degree in Psychology, Perry enlisted in 1942 for the infantry, earned a battlefield commission the following year, and was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) in France on 5 November 1944. After WWII, Perry served in the Medical Service Corps until the Korean War broke out. Then, he transferred to the infantry as a Regular Army officer. McGee assigned a young, highly motivated Captain (CPT) David C. Hearn as Perry's executive officer in BAKER Section. Several combat-experienced 4th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) volunteers fleshed out the unit. BAKER Section's first mission, VIRGINIA I, took place on 15 March 1951. That operation began when a combined twenty-four man American/ROK Army team parachuted into North Korea to destroy a mountain railway tunnel near Hyon-ni, thirty-five miles south of Wonsan.[25]

VIRGINIA I did not go well. Planning for the mission was poor, done in haste, and preparations were minimal. In the midst of planning EUSA replaced the team leader, fearing that his capture might compromise future missions. The detailed planning and rehearsals that normally characterize successful special operations did not occur. The twenty-man Korean element joined the Americans *only fifty-two hours* before the airborne drop. The Koreans came in cold. They were not trained for the mission, had made only one parachute jump, spoke little English, and had insufficient time to learn and practice their role before insertion.[26] It only got worse.

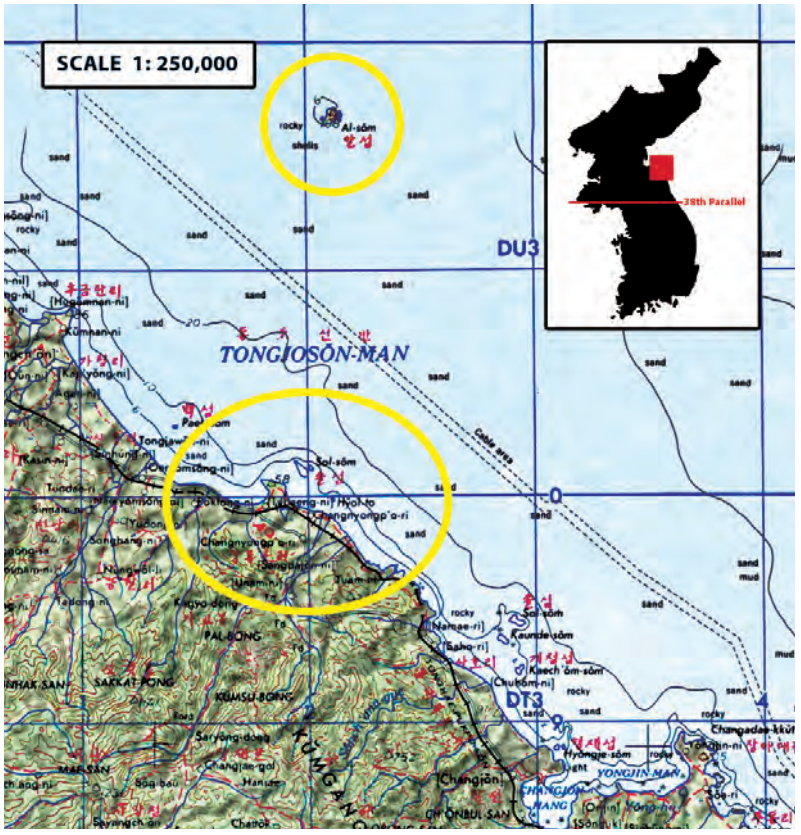
Fighting high winds, snow, and subzero temperatures, the aircrew missed the intended drop zone *by nine miles*, scattering the twenty-four men on both sides of a ridgeline. Some landed in a village, destroying the element of surprise. Although the entire VIRGINIA I team managed to reassemble and move to its objective, the leader decided that enemy activity on both the primary and secondary targets was too great. He aborted the mission. Then poor, intermittent radio communications made it difficult to arrange extraction. When they did contact the U.S. Navy vessel, the North Koreans intercepted their transmission, pinpointed their location, and closed in to destroy them. Enemy contact scattered the team into small groups and all but three were killed or captured. A U.S. Navy helicopter sent to rescue the survivors was shot down and the pilot captured.[27]

Despite the dismal failure of VIRGINIA I, eighteen more deep parachute insertions (forty teams totaling 389 men) were conducted by BAKER Section. None succeeded. Entire teams were killed or captured with no further contact after they jumped into North Korea. These abysmal results led one postwar study of special operations in Korea to bluntly conclude that the decision to continue such activities "appears to have been futile and callous."[28]

McGee also inherited Task Force (TF) REDWING, a "special American-led ROK Marine Company [trained] for intelligence, sabotage, and commando-type operations."[29] REDWING had been formed in late 1950 to seize North Korean islands along the West coast as far as the mouth of the Yalu River. Once that mission had been completed the unit remained, setting up a base on Sok-to, a small island off the northwest coast of the Hwanghae Peninsula. Although the task force operated independently, the REDWING raiders came under McGee's authority because they operated from the same West coast islands covered by TF WILLIAM ABLE/ LEOPARD. REDWING had two American soldiers (one officer and one enlisted man) serving as advisors/trainers with the ROK Marine company. Until the 1953 Armistice,



Map section showing Sok-to, home of TF REDWING.



Original military topographic map depicting location of Al-som (Nan-do) and Sol-som (Song-do) Islands off the coast of North Korea.



View of Al-som Island (Nan-do) from a resupply aircraft.

TF REDWING planned, rehearsed, and conducted small-scale raids on enemy targets while collecting intelligence on Communist troop dispositions. Because of their insular locations, REDWING Marines also assisted in locating and recovering downed Allied pilots and aircrews. Their contributions in manning the escape and evasion (E&E) net in the northwest were significant. REDWING also helped to defend the islands and even recaptured mobile guerrilla bases seized by the enemy.[30]

McGee's guerrilla operations were complicated by Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) activities. In March 1951, the CIA stationed a case officer on Paengnyong-do to coordinate West Coast E&E with LEOPARD Base. After initially relying on highly trained, four-man airborne teams for personnel recovery, the CIA switched to using local guerrillas. This cooperative CIA/LEOPARD program recruited, trained, and dispatched LEOPARD 'Gs' to recover downed personnel. By 28 January 1952, this joint effort was "credited with 15 rescues—seven British and eight American" pilots and crewmen.[31] And success in the West prompted expansion to the East Coast.

In April 1951, COL McGee established a second permanent guerrilla base camp on the Japan Sea side of North Korea, initially called TF KIRKLAND. The East Coast presented several challenges. First, there were far fewer 'Gs' on the East Coast after the large-scale evacuation of refugees from Hamhung and Hungnam in December 1950. That humanitarian operation stripped the East Coast of North Koreans sympathetic to the UN and destroyed the confidence of those left behind.[32] Second, the topography and hydrography in the KIRKLAND operating area are very different. High coastal mountain ranges dropped precipitously to deep water offshore, leaving few offshore islands suitable for bases. Third, the Joint Advisory Commission, Korea (JACK), the unconventional warfare arm of the CIA in Korea, had an active maritime raiding base established on Yo-do at the mouth of Wonsan Harbor. JACK rightfully complained about adding a new base that might complicate their operations.[33] Furthermore, the Air Force, Navy, ROK, and British Commandos were also operating in the same area, making coordination critical. Consequently, representatives from the CIA, JACK, and the EUSA met and agreed to limit the KIRKLAND operating area to a small sector south of Wonsan.[34] These combined factors meant that KIRKLAND had less area to operate in, fewer options for secure basing, and far fewer guerrillas to recruit, organize, train, and direct than LEOPARD Base. To make matters worse, the 'guerrillas' assigned to KIRKLAND were North and South Koreans thrown together with different backgrounds, ideologies, convictions, and motivations. Hence, the KIRKLAND guerrilla performances were inconsistent compared to the West Coast 'Gs.'

Nonetheless, on 15 April 1951, a group of East Coast guerrillas led by First Lieutenant (1LT) William S. 'Bucky' Harrison (an early advisor to Donkey 4) established TF KIRKLAND at Chumunjin, a small east coast port forty miles south of the Main Line of Resistance (MLR). But Harrison wanted a forward base closer to potential targets. He selected Al-som (also known as Nan-do), a tiny, rocky outcrop (less than a square mile) in the Sea of Japan. Using Al-som as a forward staging area was risky because its security depended on UN naval and air superiority. On 15 May the first elements of Harrison's unit departed by boat for Al-som and reported mission-ready four days later.[35] TF KIRKLAND and its activities are included in greater detail in another article.

Also in April, McGee's guerrilla command received its first official commendation for their combat actions on both coasts of North Korea. A communiqué from

GEN MacArthur's headquarters remarked that the "Korean partisans, operating behind enemy lines, have been instrumental in harassing the Communists and contributing materially to our knowledge of hostile dispositions."[36] In addition, the commander of the Fifth Air Force, GEN Earle E. Partridge, personally congratulated McGee for the "great job our guerrillas were doing in containing two North Korean Army Corps in the [Hwanghae] Peninsula," especially since the Communists had just commenced a major spring offensive.[37]

On 5 May 1951, EUSA changed McGee's Attrition Section into the Miscellaneous Group, 8086th Army Unit (AU) with a formal Table of Distribution (TD). The 8086th AU was tasked to "develop and direct partisan warfare by training in sabotage indigenous groups and individuals both within Allied lines and behind enemy lines." It also had to "supply partisan groups and agents operating behind enemy lines by means of water and air transportation." The official TD authorized the guerrilla command a total of twenty-nine officers and thirty-seven enlisted men. Although never manned at that level, the TD enabled the headquarters to better arrange for replacements and to fill vacant positions.[38]

With the name change came new command relationships. Responding to the ever-increasing need to coordinate 'G' activities above the EUSA level, the Far East Command (FEC) imposed itself into the command and control of the 8086th AU. Since the guerrilla command's creation in January 1951, multiple staff conferences tried to "fix responsibility for all behind-the-lines activity in a single headquarters."[39] The doctrinal solution was to elevate the guerrilla command to a theater-level command. Lacking FEC and EUSA consensus on the issue, incremental changes in the 8086th TD seemed a small step toward the ideal solution. But they had no effect at the field level.

Although involving FEC in guerrilla operations made good military sense, the elevation move fell short because there were no additional authorities granted. Instead, two new 'coordinating' staffs were imposed between McGee and the theater commander. In reality, the new arrangement increased confusion and diffused authority among several staff sections in EUSA and FEC. 'Command' of the 8086th was retained by the EUSA G-3, but the unit had to coordinate all activities with the Far East Command/ Liaison Group (FEC/LG) in Japan, via the FEC/Liaison Detachment (LD) in Korea (FEC/LD[K]). Theater visibility for all guerrilla operations and activities was blocked by the staffs. The reality was that the guerrillas had "no chain of command."[40]

Furthermore, as long as the guerrilla command remained within the EUSA, it was subject to Army priorities and the conventional fight along the MLR took precedence. While the most effective solution was to make the guerrilla command a separate unit directly under the theater commander (with sufficient authority to control and coordinate all special operations in Korea), it was not accepted. Ironically, that same optimal solution was spelled out in existing Army doctrine.[41] Unfortunately for the guerrillas, the idea proved too radical for the conventional military in power. In the interim, COL McGee did the best he could with the new command relationships.



May 1951 Miscellaneous Group, 8086th AU structure.

By June 1951, Colonel McGee's guerrilla command consisted of: two major guerrilla 'base' units (LEOPARD on the West Coast and KIRKLAND on the East); a third base under consideration at Kanghwa-do near the mouth of the Han River (future WOLFPACK site); several 'mobile' bases with guerrilla units conducting operations against the enemy; TF REDWING operating from Sok-to; and BAKER Section training Korean agents for covert missions behind enemy lines. COL McGee's map shows the approximate locations of his units in June 1951 and radio sites to connect all elements.[42]

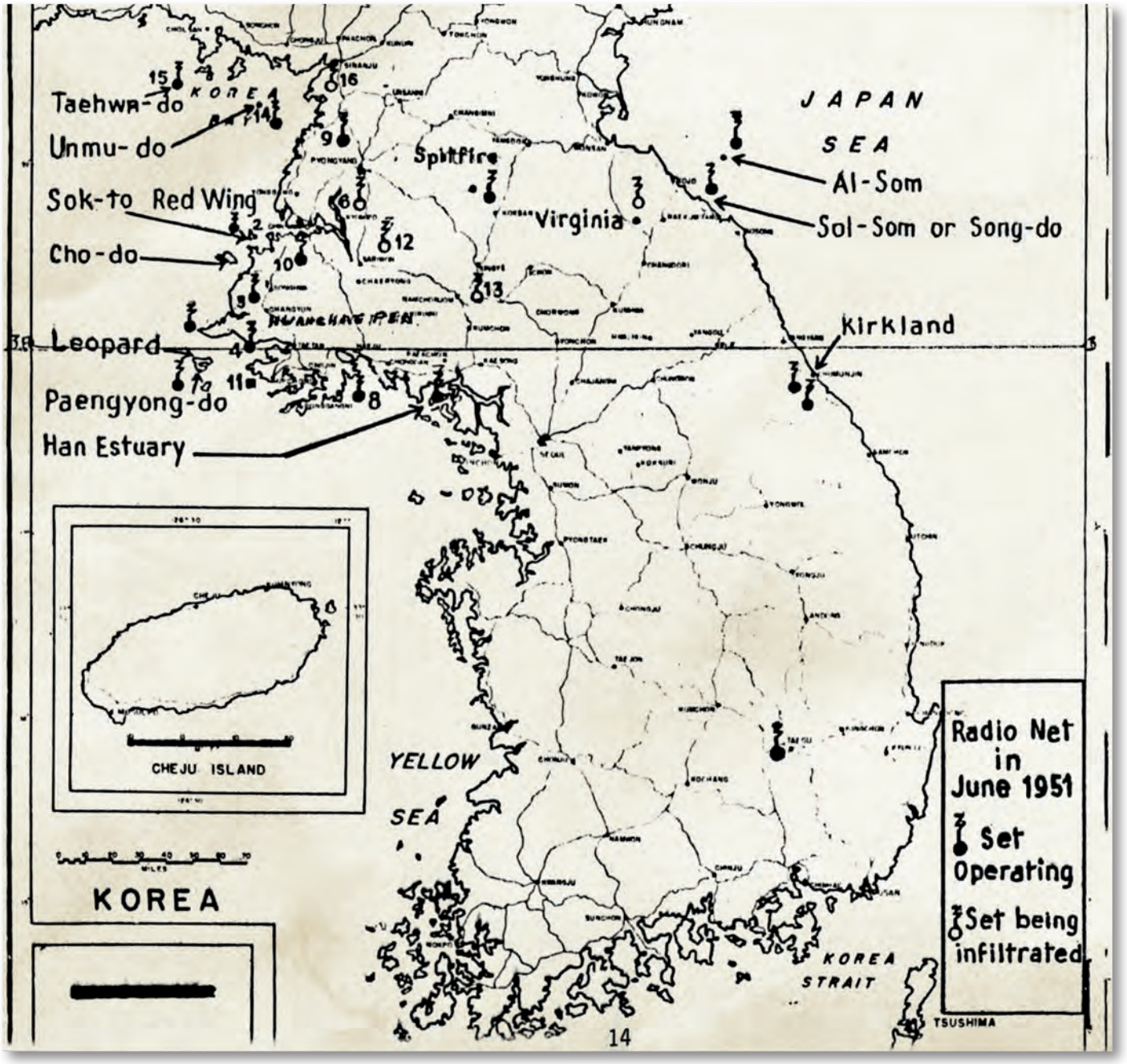
COL McGee left Korea to attend the Army War College. Before leaving, the functions of coordinating guerrilla actions behind enemy lines, airdropping of personnel and equipment into North Korea, deconflicting of small boat operations along both coasts, and naval gunfire and close air support coordination (all involving constant communication and interaction with FEC, higher services, and the CIA) came to a head. Minor organizational changes enabled McGee to coordinate operations with FEC, but he still had to use the EUSA staff for all his growing administrative and logistics needs. Yet guerrilla command requests lacked the weight of authority of separate FEC commands. McGee simply did not have the tasking authority needed to support his assigned missions. This problem was never resolved.

McGee's convoluted command and coordination chain was further stressed by the constant assignment of new staff officers (unfamiliar with guerrilla warfare requirements). And EUSA also changed as Armistice talks progressed and strategic priorities shifted. When

he created the Miscellaneous Division, the EUSA G-3 (COL John A. Dabney) strongly supported guerrilla warfare. COL Dabney's replacements, however, further subordinated the Miscellaneous Division under the *Deputy* G-3. McGee had to then justify requests "before a board of Deputy G-3 and G-4 who were seated beside each other on the opposite side of the table from me. I was quizzed on my needs like a schoolboy." Similarly, the Deputy G-3 prevented McGee from attending the EUSA Commanders Conferences where he could have discussed operational and logistical issues with those who could solve them.[43] The Army's ground combat elements were fighting daily for key terrain along the MLR, consuming most of the EUSA staff's attention and resources. Support for guerrilla warfare dropped several rungs.

COL McGee was awarded a Legion of Merit on 30 June 1951 for "demonstrating remarkable resourcefulness and superior administrative ability" in planning and organizing the guerrilla command.[44] He was soon replaced by his executive officer Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Samuel W. Koster, and then later by another WWII Philippine guerrilla veteran, LTC Jay D. Vanderpool, both coming from Major General (MG) Charles A. Willoughby's G-2 staff.[45]

During his tenure, McGee made great progress in creating a functional guerrilla command out of nothing. He started with ill-equipped and untrained irregulars armed with captured weapons and ammunition. Yet he left behind a mixed legacy. On the West Coast, McGee's two-tiered base/mobile site system adequately trained, supplied, and directed the North Korean guerrillas.



Map annotated by COL McGee depicting locations of the 8086th units and radio nodes in June 1951.

Some of the guerrilla command's successes were:

- Keeping the Communist forces off-balance.
- Penetrating the Communist defenses with ease and regularity.
- Conducting deep operations fairly effectively.
- Occupying and defending the West Coast islands and maintaining secure base areas.
- Tying down significant numbers of Communist forces in rear areas.
- Protecting the west flank of the UN MLR.[46]

The guerrilla command's problems were:

- The lack of doctrinal framework for Army guerrilla operations.
- The focus on tactical level operations to gain immediate results.
- The East Coast guerrilla base never operating up to par with that of the West.
- The failure of BAKER Section deep parachute operations.
- The constant command, control, and support issues.
- The guerrilla motivation was freedom for all Koreans.
- It was a single-service, Army-driven command, not joint or combined.
- The guerrilla command lacked the joint command authorities at the theater level to succeed.
- Strategic guerrilla warfare guidance was never provided by FEC.

McGee's guerrillas presented a viable threat to the weak flanks and rear of the North Koreans that begged exploitation. The little guidance received was short-sighted, and concentrated on tying down enemy troops that otherwise could concentrate against the UN's front lines. McGee's guerrilla command was especially effective in two key areas: information collection and assisting in the recovery of downed pilots and aircrews. McGee's successor would work hard to expand those successes, but the Armistice negotiations and changing U.S. strategy would have a dramatic impact on the American-led guerrilla command.

Michael Krivdo earned his PhD in Military and Diplomatic History from Texas A&M University. He is a former Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance Officer with varied special operations research interests.

Endnotes

1 Letter, "Questionnaire, Project MHD-3," 16 March 1953, Headquarters, 2nd Partisan Infantry Regiment [PIR], Far East Command/ Liaison Detachment, Korea [FEC/LD (K)], 8240th Army Unit (AU), included in 8086th AU, Armed Forces Far East (AFFE) Military History Detachment-3, "UN Partisan Forces in the Korean Conflict, 1951-1952," Project MHD-3, Center of Military History, Fort McNair, DC, (hereafter "UN Partisan Forces"), 85-88, quote from 85.

2 "Guerrilla Summary 64," 5 April 1953, Headquarters, Partisan Command, FEC/LD (K), 8240th Army Unit, condensed in "UN Partisan Forces," 101; "Operation SPOOK," Interview with Second Lieutenant (2LT) William O. Watson, Jr., 8240th AU, 2 November 1952 (hereafter "Watson Interview"), included in "UN Partisan Forces," 128-39.

3 "Guerrilla Summary 64," in "UN Partisan Forces," 101; "Watson Interview," included in "UN Partisan Forces," 128-39.

4 Frederick W. Cleaver, George Fitzpatrick, John Ponturo, *et al*., "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea, 1951-1954," AFFE Group Technical Memorandum ORO-T-64, Johns Hopkins University, Operations Research Office, June 1956 (hereafter ORO Study), 30-31; Quote from "UN Partisan Forces," 10. In December 1950 and January 1951, the UNC received many reports from several commands ranging from ROK Navy vessels, Royal Navy warships, intelligence sources, British Commandos and others regarding the presence of tens of thousands of refugees accumulating on the many islands off the west coast of North Korea. Their sudden presence on those previously sparsely inhabited islands caused concerns both for humanitarian relief and military reasons since the refugees essentially owned only what they could move there on the backs of the people and a collection of appropriated small boats. For more information see the many copies of reports from UN commands in the West Coast area as contained in both the ORO Study and "UN Partisan Forces." In addition, although the definition of the term 'partisan' has evolved over the years and is not widely used today, that term was extensively used by the UN and U.S. to describe the North Korean guerrillas and that practice is continued in these articles.

5 MAJ William A. Burke, "Report on Korean Volunteer Groups Operating on the Hwanghae Peninsula," 20 January 1951, copy in "UN Partisan Forces," 31-32, quotes from 31. MAJ Burke enlisted in the Army Reserve on 2 January 1938, and accepted a reserve commission as a cavalry second lieutenant on 7 February 1942. He served as an armor and cavalry officer in WWII, earning two Silver Stars and a regular commission. Burke graduated from the Command and General Staff Course in 1948 and became COL McGee's Miscellaneous Division second-in-command soon after its creation (U.S. Army, *Official Army Register, 1951*, vol. 1 [Washington, DC: GPO, 1951], 93).

6 ORO Study, 30-31; Quote from "UN Partisan Forces," 10.

7 "Record of Assignments," John H. McGee Service Record, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), Military Personnel Records, St. Louis, MO (hereafter "McGee Service Record").

8 "McGee Service Record"; David W. Hogan, Jr., *Raiders or Elite Infantry? The Changing Role of the U.S. Army Rangers from Dieppe to Grenada* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 105-12; General Headquarters, Far East Command, "Citation for the Legion of Merit (Oak-Leaf Cluster)" for John H. McGee, "McGee Service Record"; MAJ William J. Fox, "Inter-Allied Cooperation During Combat Operations," Military History Section, Far East Command (FEC), Center of Military History, Fort McNair, Washington, DC, 15 Aug. 52, quote from 10-11.

9 "Record of Assignments," "McGee Service Record;" John H. McGee, "Attrition Warfare," G-3 Section, EUSA, 13 January 1951, included in "UN Partisan Forces," 65-67, first two quotes from 65 and 67, respectively. Around that same time an assessment of the guerrillas by MAJ Burke predicted they might, "if supplied, organized and properly employed," pose "an ever-growing liability to the Communist Forces" (MAJ William A. Burke to COL John A. Dabney, "Report on Korean Volunteer Groups Operating on the Hwanghae Peninsula," 20 January 1951, in "UN Partisan Forces," 31-32, quote from 31).

10 McGee, Undated copy of "Proposed Organization of Attrition Warfare Headquarters (Officer Strength)," in "UN Partisan Forces," 74; McGee, "Study of Guerrilla Warfare in Korea," in "UN Partisan Forces," 75-76, quotes from 76.

11 McGee, "Study of Guerrilla Warfare in Korea," quote from 76.

12 "Proposed Organization of Attrition Warfare Headquarters (Officer Strength)," in "UN Partisan Forces," 74; Quotes from McGee, "Attrition Warfare," in "UN Partisan Forces," 66.

13 ORO Study, 30-31; "UN Partisan Forces," 65-66; John H. McGee to Shaun M. Darragh, San Antonio, TX, 8 February 1985 (hereafter "Darragh Letter"), Archives, Army Heritage Education Center (AHEC), Carlisle Barracks, PA, 10. According to McGee, the innocuous sounding name 'Miscellaneous Division' was merely "a cover name for a G-3 commanded unit to conduct guerrilla warfare." Essentially, EUSA intended from the beginning that the unit be an operational command and not merely serve as a staff section with limited administrative functions (quote from "Darragh Letter," 6). Unfortunately for the guerrillas, EUSA's decision to maintain the unit as a staff department rather than make it an independent command under the EUSA (or higher) led to later problems.

14 ORO Study, 30-31; "UN Partisan Forces," 65-66; "Darragh Letter," 10; "McGee Service Record."

15 MAJ William A. Burke, "Organization and Plan for Partisan Operations in Korea (Plan ABLE)," 23 January 1951, in "UN Partisan Forces," 33-41, quote from 33; "Darragh Letter," 10-11.

16 Burke, "Plan ABLE," 33-41, quotes from 33; "Darragh Letter," 10-11.

17 "Information gathered by Observation and Interview by COL A[rthur]. S. Daley" undated, Enclosure 55 to "UN Partisan Forces," 77-83; "Letter of Instruction," Headquarters, Operation LEOPARD, 15 March 1952, "UN Partisan Forces," 92-93; "Information gathered by Observation and Interview by MAJ B[illy]. C. Mossman," undated, Enclosure 61 to "UN Partisan Forces," 120.

18 Burke, "Plan ABLE," 36.

19 COL Richard M. Ripley (Ret.), interviewed by Dr. Charles H Briscoe, Dr. Michael E. Krivdo, Mr. Eugene G. Piasecki (hereafter Ripley interview), 28 July 2011, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

20 "Darragh Letter," 10-13, quote from 10.

21 John H. McGee, Miscellaneous Division, to EUSA G-3, 15 March 1951, "Status Report of Miscellaneous Division," in "UN Partisan Forces," 54; ORO Report, 30; "Darragh Letter," 10-13. WILLIAM ABLE Base gained its name by combining MAJ Burke's first name (William) with his own Plan ABLE.

22 ORO Study, 30-32, 44-46; McGee, "Status Report of Miscellaneous Division," in "UN Partisan Forces," 54, quote from text; "Darragh Letter," 10.

23 ORO Study, 30-32, 44-46; "UN Partisan Forces," 24-27; "Information Gathered by Observation and Interview by COL A[rthur]. S. Daley," undated, Enclosure 55 to "UN Partisan Forces," 77-83; Information gathered by Observation and Interview by MAJ B[illy]. C. Mossman," undated, Enclosure 61 to "UN Partisan Forces," 120. "Letter of Instruction," Headquarters, Operation LEOPARD, 15 March 1952, copy in "UN Partisan Forces," 237-42, quote from 240. The transcript of one meeting at LEOPARD Base between the American commander and several Donkey leaders is highly illustrative of this 'give and take' process. The Donkey leaders presented their requests for support items outside their normal rice and salt allocations, and the American commander made a determination of what he would provide based upon that unit's recent performance in fighting the Communists. A copy of that transcript is found in Enclosure 64 of "UN Partisan Forces," 140-51. The down side of this practice is that it encouraged the inflation of combat reporting, particularly when Americans were discouraged, even forbidden from accompanying the guerrillas in combat and assessing the validity of the reports firsthand.

24 ORO Study, 30-31, 40. One issue that has added to the confusion in the study of special operations in the Korean War is the frequent name changes and modifications of command structure/relationships that took place throughout the war. Even persons familiar with these units were confused.

25 ORO Study, 154; *Official Army Register, 1951*, 528; Award of Distinguished Service Cross to Eugene M. Perry, Jr., General Orders No. 85, Headquarters, Seventh U. S. Army, 1945; Douglas C. Dillard, *Operation Aviary: Airborne Special Operations – Korea, 1950-1953* (Victoria, BC, Canada: Trafford Publishing, 2003), 12-13, 28-29; Memorandum, John H. McGee to Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, EUSA, G-3, EUSA, 15 March 1951, "Status Report of Miscellaneous Division," reprinted in "UN Partisan Forces," 54.

26 ORO Study, 52; 92-93; Army Security Center, Fort Meade, MD, Returned POW Interview, SGT Martin R. Watson, 7 June 1954 (ASCIR #0064) (hereafter Watson Interview), Record Group (RG) 319 (Army Staff), Entry 383.6, Box 1693, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD, 2; John H. McGee to COL Rod Paschall, San Antonio, TX, 24 March 1986, John Hugh McGee Papers, Box 38, Entry F7, AHEC, Carlisle Barracks, PA (hereafter "Paschall Letter"), 24-26.

27 ORO Study, 52; 92-93; Kenneth Finlayson, "Helicopters in the Korean War: The Rescue of Virginia 1," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 1, No. 2 (2005), 40-45; Watson Interview, 2; "Paschall Letter," 24-26; Ed Evanhoe, *Dark Moon: Eighth Army Special Operations in the Korean War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press,), 50-62; Dillard, *Operation Aviary*, 28-29. In the final accounting of the mission, only three of the original four U.S. Rangers were extracted successfully. The remaining Ranger (SGT Martin R. Watson) and a downed helicopter pilot, Navy Lieutenant (junior grade) John H. Thornton, were later captured near the village of Yanggu, tortured, and held until released in late 1953. Of the twenty Korean agents accompanying VIRGINIA I, only two returned to friendly lines and they were executed by the ROK Army when debriefers discovered they had earlier been captured by North Koreans and turned loose to serve as spies.

28 ORO Study, 15-16, 52-53, 91-94, quote from 94.

29 ORO Study, 39-40, 42, quote from 39.

30 ORO Study, 39-40, 42; Pat Meid and James M. Yingling, *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea 1950-1953*, vol. V, *Operations in West Korea* (Historical Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps), (Washington, DC: GPO, 1972), 53-56.

31 Central Intelligence Agency, "Infiltration and Resupply of Agents in North Korea, 1952-1953" (redacted document: Air Force/Haas/Korean War 51-53 HS[Mar 95/KCRuffner] Doc#2), 160-162, quote from 162.

32 MG (Ret.) John K. Singlaub, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 21 March 2012, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

33 "Darragh Letter," 11-12; "Paschall Letter," 19; Lawrence V. Schuetta, Aerospace Studies Institute, *Guerrilla Warfare and Airpower in Korea, 1950-1953* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1990), 1. The activities of JACK are covered in a separate article in the next issue.

34 Central Intelligence Agency, "CIA in Korea, 1946-1965, Volume 1," (Declassified Extract), 118; Document extract, "Status of the CIA Mission Korea, October 1951," Chief, Far East, to Central Intelligence Agency, 6 March 1952, 1.

35 ORO Study, 155; Telephone interview, Kingston Winget with Ed Evanhoe, as cited in Ed Evanhoe, *Dark Moon: Eighth Army Special Operations in the Korean War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995), 73; "Darragh Letter," 17-18; "Paschall Letter," 19-20, quote from 19; Don J. Neff, "Birds of Yang-Do, Korea," *The Auk* 73, No. 4 (October 1956), 551-55; "Short Chronology of the Unconventional Warfare Campaign, 1950-1954," on Internet at: <http://www.korean-war.com/warfare campaign.html>, last accessed on 21 November 2011. According to COL McGee, Al-som, just over the horizon from the North Korean mainland, had "little to no beach, [and] was the home of several fishermen and a populous gull rookery" that gave it its name, literally 'Egg Island.'

36 Far East Command, "Communique 845 by General of the Army MacArthur's Headquarters," 5-6 April 1951, contained in United Nations Security Council document S/2080 11 April 1951.

37 "Paschall Letter," 23, quote from text.

38 HQ, EUSA Korea, Table of Distribution No. 80-8086, Miscellaneous Group, 8086th Army Unit, 5 May 1951, Record Group (RG) 319, Army-Chief of Special Warfare, 1951-54, Secret Decimal Files, 400-112-413.52, Box 26, Psy War 400.34 (S) (1951), National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD, also cited in Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 104, quotes from text; ORO Study, 39-41.

39 ORO Study, 36, quote from text.

40 Rod Paschall, "A Study in Command and Control: Special Operations in Korea, 1951-1953," U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1988, 18-19, quote from 19; ORO Study, 36, 38.

41 Department of the Army, "Organization and Conduct of Guerrilla Warfare," FM 31-21 (Washington, DC: GPO, October 1951). Primary historical documentation reflects that the Far East Command received 300 copies of FM 31-21 after its publication in October 1951.

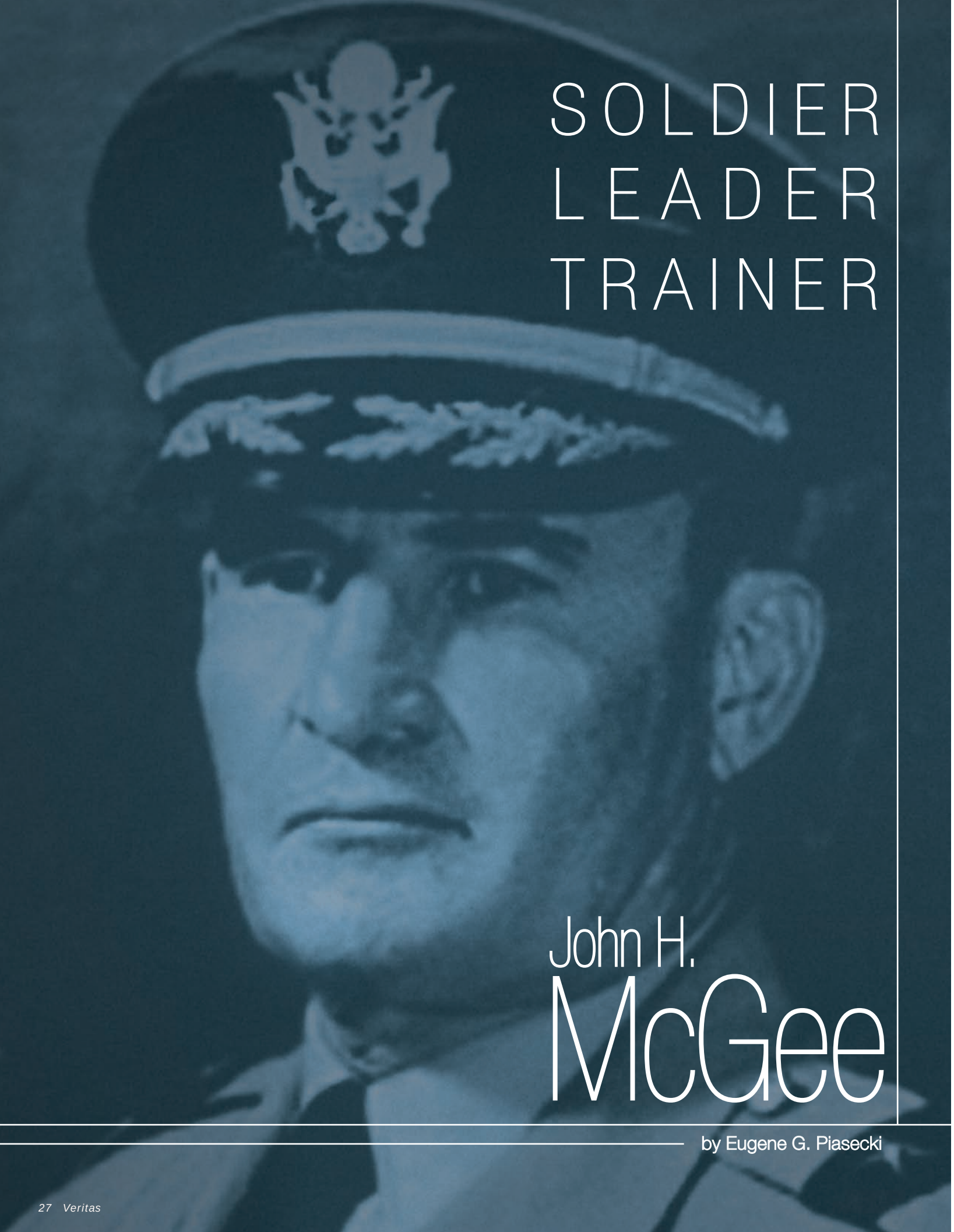
42 "Paschall Letter," 14.

43 "Paschall Letter," 20-21, quote from 20; for interservice and interagency coordination, see the example of the "Belfast Conference" reports, "UN Partisan Forces," Enclosures 41 through 44, 55-60.

44 "Citation for the Legion of Merit," General Headquarters, Far East Command, "McGee Service Record."

45 "Record of Assignments," "McGee Service Record;" Special Orders No. 340, Headquarters, EUSA Korea, 6 December 1951; Senior Officers Oral History Program: Project 83-12, Jay D. Vanderpool, Colonel, USA (Ret.), U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center (AHEC), Carlisle Barracks, PA (hereafter "Vanderpool Interview"), 138; David W. Hogan, Jr., *U.S. Army Special Operations in World War II* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, Department of the Army, 1992), 80.

46 Although the focus of this article is on McGee's guerrilla command, the presence of his irregular fighters backed by allied air and naval fire support provided a relatively secure environment that supported many other aspects of warfare: signal intelligence; human intelligence; combat weather stations; escape and evasion sites; and launch sites for raids or attacks by special operations units.



SOLDIER LEADER TRAINER

John H. McGee

by Eugene G. Piasecki

In the early twentieth century, the United States Army was characterized by a lack of organizational and operational far-sightedness. This was especially true with respect to unconventional guerrilla, partisan, and irregular warfare. Mostly ignored as viable considerations in theater battle plans, it was not until the United States Army had suffered its initial defeats in the Pacific from the Japanese that American senior military leaders began to explore these methods as a way to continue the fight against an occupying enemy. The purpose of this article is to highlight Brigadier General (BG) John Hugh McGee's contributions to today's Special Operations Forces. The lessons he had learned before and during WWII to train American, Allied, and indigenous forces were validated and applied while conducting successful irregular warfare operations against Chinese and North Korean units in Korea from 1950 to 1951.



Colonel John Hugh McGee, USMA 1931

In July 1940, after nine years of U.S. Army infantry duty, Captain (CPT) John H. McGee reported for duty at Pettit Barracks on Mindanao in the Philippine Islands. Assigned to command Company C, 45th Infantry, Philippine Scouts (PS), the only Moro Company in the Scouts, CPT McGee realized that training of the indigenous soldiers using American doctrinal tactics, techniques, and procedures presented unique and distinct challenges and opportunities that he had never before encountered. Because of his successes with the Moros, CPT McGee was selected to command the Zamboanga Training Center at Calarian on Mindanao in mid-August 1941.[1] It was here that McGee gained the experience of establishing and operating a training/reception center, and while that would prove beneficial later in Korea, his priority at Zamboanga was to train the Philippine Army.

After the Japanese landed on Mindanao, McGee was sent from the training center to command a Philippine Army battalion defending Del Monte Airfield. This was followed by his further assignment as the executive officer and then regimental commander of the 101st Infantry, Philippine Army (PA) of the Davao Subsector from 8 December 1941 to 10 May 1942.[2] In obedience to BG William F. Sharp's orders to surrender, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) McGee and his units became Japanese prisoners of war (POWs) on 10 May 1942.[3] As McGee remembers, "To my knowledge, we had no plan for guerrilla warfare [on Mindanao]. Our tactical doctrine should have provided for transition from conventional warfare to guerrilla warfare … In a rear area it would have been right to evade surrender, but as commander of a unit in contact with the enemy it seemed wrong."[4] After internment at the Davao Penal Colony (DAPECOL) on Mindanao, McGee was transferred for shipment to Japan. He escaped captivity



Bancas similar to the one here are native to the Philippines and were so commonly used to transport products, people, and for fishing, the Japanese rarely paid them attention.



Outer perimeter and barracks building at the Davao Penal Colony used by the Japanese as a Prisoner of War (POW) camp.



Pettit Barracks was located in Zamboanga City on Mindanao and was also home to the U.S. Army's 43rd Infantry Regiment (Philippine Scouts).

in June 1944 by jumping over the side of a ship.[5] Rescued by a Filipino in a native *banca* he was taken to a guerrilla corps headquarters located in Mindanao's rugged interior. There, he contacted COL Wendell W. Fertig, commander of Mindanao's guerrilla forces and requested an assignment to Southern Zamboanga as a liaison officer between Fertig's organization and the liberating American forces.[6]

Rather than capitalize on McGee's experience, Fertig rejected his request for service and referred to McGee "as a former POW with ideas on how to win the war." In return, McGee was placed in command of eighty-one other former Japanese Prisoners of War (POWs) who were then evacuated from Mindanao by the American submarine, USS *Narwhal* (SS-167), on 29 September 1944.[7] Arriving back in the United States, LTC McGee recuperated from his Philippine experiences while he attended the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. After graduation, he was reassigned to the Philippines to command the 169th Infantry Regiment, 43rd Infantry Division (ID) preparing for the invasion of Japan in August 1945. When the dropping of the Atomic Bombs canceled the invasion, the 43rd ID deployed to Japan for a brief period of occupation duty before returning to Camp Stoneman, California for inactivation on 26 October 1946. Capitalizing on his WWII experiences, the Army assigned LTC McGee to positions that utilized the skills he had acquired during WWII to benefit officers and soldiers. These included duty as a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Instructor at the University of Illinois (1946-1949) and command of the 8th Infantry Regiment of the reactivated 4th Infantry Division (Training) at Fort Ord, California (1949-1950).[8]

After North Korea invaded South Korea on 25 June 1950, LTC McGee was ordered to the G-3, Miscellaneous Division, Eighth U. S. Army (EUSA) Headquarters in the Naktong Perimeter of South Korea.[9] Reporting in July 1950, McGee was directed by COL William H. Bartlett, EUSA Chief of Operations, to prepare a concept plan that addressed conducting guerrilla operations in North Korea. Wasting no time, LTC McGee set to the task and based his study on the assumption that armed American and Korean evadees were in the enemy's rear area and could be recruited to form the nuclei of the guerrilla organization. Approved in concept, and with McGee named to organize the North Korean Guerrilla Organization, EUSA G-2 could not confirm that either Americans and/or Koreans were present in enough



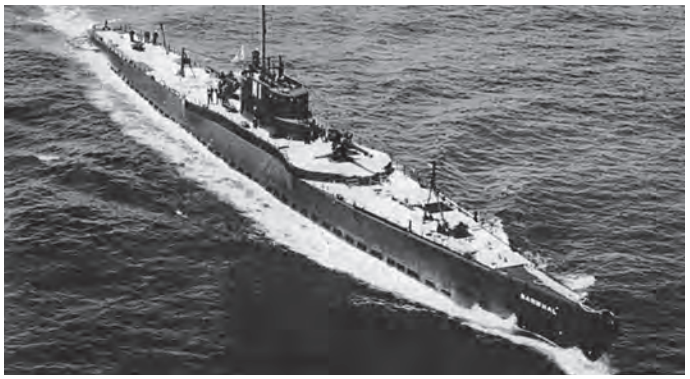
43rd Infantry Division SSI



169th Infantry Regiment DUI



4th Infantry Division SSI



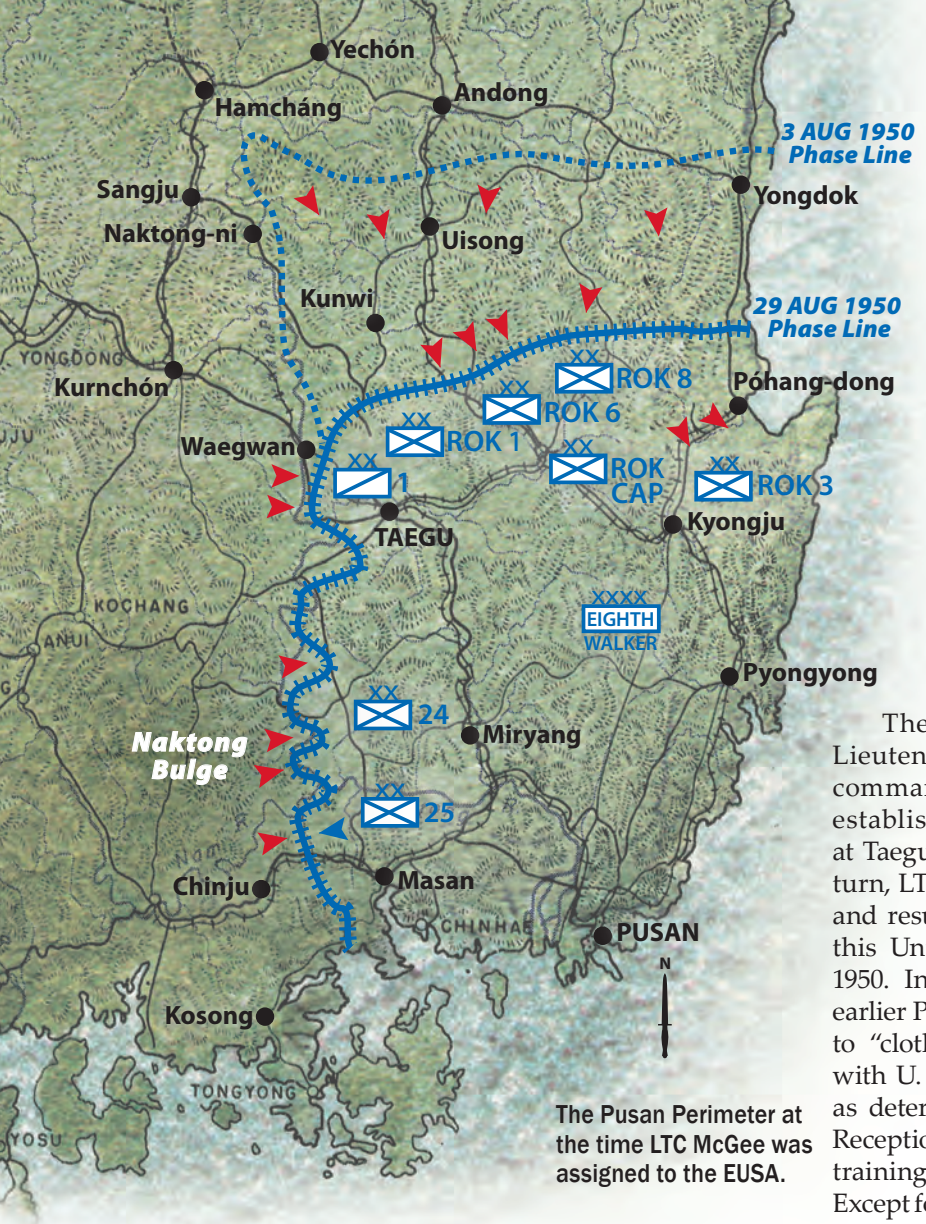
The USS *Narwhal*, (SS-167) became the leading U.S. submarine to support Philippine guerrilla activities during WWII. Launched in 1929, it could carry 92 tons of ammunition and stores. It brought out LTC McGee and 81 others on its 14th war patrol.



Colonel Wendell W. Fertig was the commander of Mindanao's guerrilla forces from 1942 through 1945. His WWII experience resulted in selection as one of initial staff officers assigned to the Office of the Chief of Psychological Warfare (OCPW).



Camp Stoneman in Pittsburg, CA became the main port of embarkation/debarkation for the majority of American forces deploying and returning by U. S. Navy transports to Japan and Korea.



The Pusan Perimeter at the time LTC McGee was assigned to the EUSA.



Sign indicating the location of the Far East Command (FEC) Replacement Detachment at Camp Drake, Japan.

strength to create a guerrilla movement. This fact, coupled with the already existing shortages of personnel, weapons, and equipment in EUSA, led Far East Command (FEC) to decide to assume control of the guerrilla organization itself and to direct EUSA to discontinue its efforts.[10]

Shortly thereafter, the North Koreans broke through the Naktong Perimeter between Taegu and Pohang and formed the Pohang Pocket. In response, FEC began forming the 1st Raider Company (GHQ Raiders) while the Miscellaneous Division was directed to organize a separate 'commando type unit' to infiltrate the penetration and collect enemy information. Having screened Army volunteers in the Yokohama-Tokyo area for this type assignment before reporting to Korea, LTC McGee again went to the replacement depot at Camp Drake, Japan to recruit Ranger volunteers. McGee selected Second Lieutenant (2LT) Ralph Puckett Jr. to command the Eighth Army Ranger Company. Satisfied with 2LT Puckett's selection of officers and men, he returned to Korea to establish the Ranger Training Center at Kijang on 15 August 1950. Located approximately five miles north of Pusan, "Ranger Hill" was an ideal location to conduct the type of day and night training that paid dividends in combat.[11]

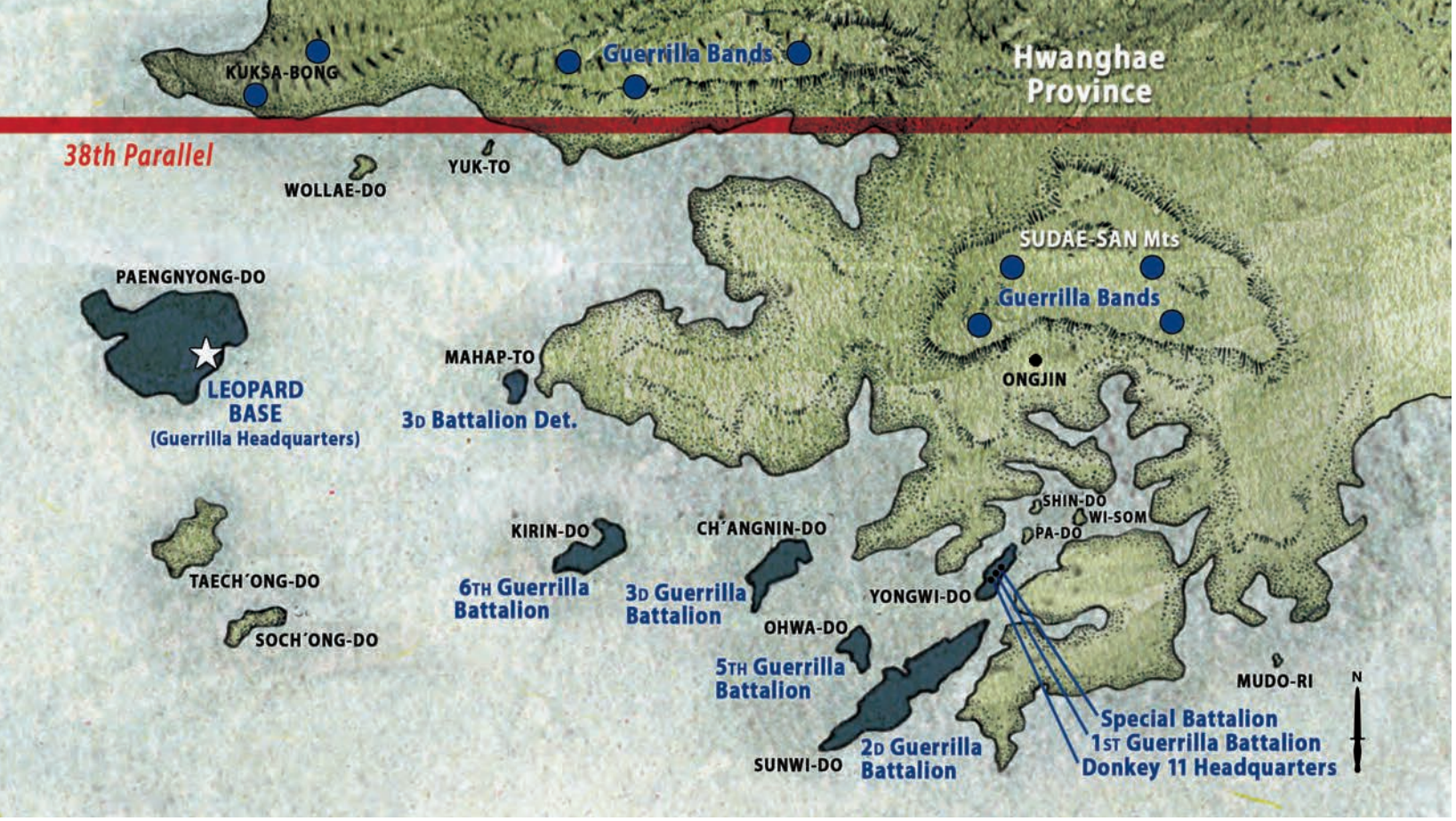
The success of the Ranger Training Center led Lieutenant General (LTG) Walton H. Walker, EUSA commander, to order the 2nd Logistical Command to establish a United Nations Reception Center (UNRC) at Taegu University as soon as EUSA moved from it. In turn, LTC McGee's efforts at Kijang did not go unnoticed and resulted in his selection to organize and command this United Nations Reception Center on 1 November 1950. In many ways this mirrored and capitalized on his earlier Philippines training experience. Given the mission to "clothe, equip, and provide familiarization training with U. S. Army weapons and equipment to UN troops as determined essential for operations in Korea by the Reception Center Commander," the UNRC also supplied training facilities, areas, and assistance when requested.[12] Except for the British and their Commonwealth Forces who trained at Sasebo, Japan, all other Free Nation Forces that supported the EUSA were prepared for combat in Korea at the UN Reception Center.[13] In November 1950, when the Chinese entered the war and the situation changed in Korea so did McGee's assignment to the Reception Center.

Notified of increased North Korean resistance to the Chinese presence on the Hwanghae Peninsula in western North Korea, FEC authorized EUSA to organize and conduct guerrilla operations in Korea in January 1951. Once again, EUSA G-3 directed LTC McGee to submit recommendations "for the conduct of guerrilla operations in North Korea."[14] Realizing that water transportation and supplying rice were two major components for achieving success, McGee's concept for developing the guerrilla organization was to accomplish the following three tasks:

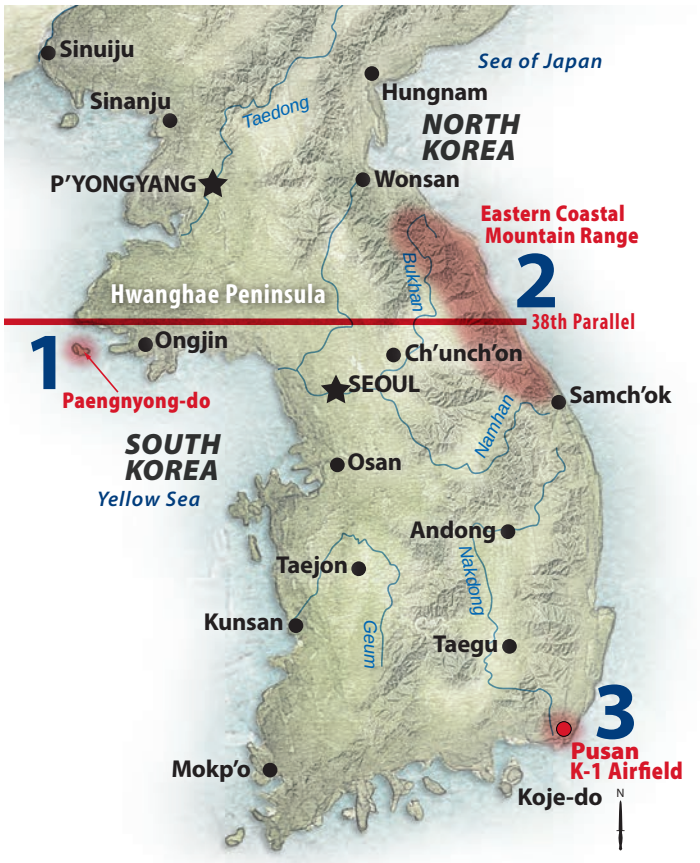
1. Western North Korea: Establish a major base on Paengnyong-do off the west tip of the Hwanghae Peninsula and just south of the 38th Parallel.

2. Eastern North Korea: Establish a mobile base in the coastal mountain range with Korean Rangers to provide base security.

3. Central North Korea: A small air-dropped unit, based at Pusan near the K-1 Airfield, would establish guerrilla nuclei and conduct sabotage and intelligence operations.



Map of the Guerrilla Unit locations, April 1951.



Guerrilla Taskings:

1. Establish a mobile base on Paengnyong-do.
2. Establish a mobile base in coastal mountain range.
3. Establish guerrilla nuclei and conduct sabotage & intelligence operations.

The organization proposed to control this operation became known as the 8086th Army Unit (AU) and was located at EUSA Headquarters. Its mission was "to conduct the guerrilla activities of intelligence, attrition, and haven in the enemy's rear and to provide maximum tactical support to EUSA during its coming advance to liberate North Korea."[15]

Reassigned to the EUSA G-3, but under the direction of the Deputy G-3 who had now been given command responsibility for the 8086th AU, LTC McGee discovered that the war's focus had definitely shifted from what it had been in July 1950. No longer was there a deliberate plan to liberate North Korea. The Armistice negotiations that began in June 1951 would eventually result in a cease-fire, and an agreement between the belligerents would signal the mutual withdrawal of combat forces from the 38th Parallel. Also included as part of these changes was a marked decline in the personnel and equipment required to support the North Korea Guerrilla Organization (8086th AU). In July 1951, LTC McGee's Korea service ended when FEC's advance party arrived at EUSA G-3 to regain control of guerrilla operations. The WWII veteran received orders to attend the Army War College at Carlisle, Pennsylvania.[16]

EPILOGUE

During the course of his military career, Brigadier General John Hugh McGee gained a wealth of combat and training experience. The lessons he learned from 1931 to 1961 have been shared either in his autobiography, *Rice and Salt* or the Ranger Association after his induction into the Ranger Hall

of Fame in 1995. Although Korea marked his last formal assignment with Special Operations Forces, the examples below apply just as much to today's special operators as they did when McGee first experienced them.

Examples of Lessons Learned

A. One of the first principles Americans must learn in training foreign troops is that they establish themselves as the ones responsible for dispensing military supplies or funds to the foreign army.

B. An American advisor's leadership skills depend as much on his professional qualifications as it does on his ability to influence those in charge of providing the foreign army its resources.

C. Whenever possible, indigenous officers and noncommissioned officers should train and instruct their own troops.

D. The infantry trainer is like a football coach. He concentrates his first instructional effort on teaching and developing the individual soldier's basic combat proficiency.

E. Important combat fundamentals are: physical condition, obedience, and timely accurate individual and crew-served weapons proficiency.

F. When conducting jungle warfare the most important principle is to encircle the enemy when attacking, but to avoid being encircled when attacked.

G. Survival of guerrilla organizations depends heavily on indigenous support, isolated terrain, the availability of food, and the enemy's weaknesses.

H. Single guerrilla units are capable of combining with other guerrilla units to form battalion, regiment, division, corps, or army equivalents.

I. The civilian nature of partisan organizations lends itself more to defending and operating in its own locality than it does to combining with other units and conducting operations outside its home territory.

J. While awaiting the arrival of a liberating force, guerrilla and partisan operations are normally limited to collecting intelligence, methodically reducing enemy forces, and securing the locations from which the first two activities can be planned and conducted.[17]

Eugene G. Piasecki is a retired Special Forces officer who has been with the USASOC History Office since 2006. A USMA graduate, he earned his Masters Degree in military history from Norwich University and is currently pursuing a PhD. His current research interests include the history of Army Special Forces, Special Forces involvement in Korea and Somalia, and the History of Camp Mackall, NC.

Endnotes

1 Brigadier General (Ret) John H. McGee, *Rice and Salt* (San Antonio, Texas: The Naylor Company, 1962), 22-23.

2 John H. McGee military service information. National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records, 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri. Documents include Record of Assignments and selected award Citations from 1950 to 1961. The information covers McGee's service from the Philippine Islands to his retirement.

3 McGee, *Rice and Salt*, 61. BG William F. Sharp, commander of the Visayan-Mindanao Force, became subordinate to Lieutenant General Jonathan M. Wainwright on Corregidor after the War Department placed Wainwright in command of all the American and Philippine forces in the Philippine Archipelago. Sharp's orders to surrender came after Japanese Lieutenant General Masaharu Homma's demand for unconditional surrender and his threat to kill all U.S. and Filipino prisoners taken on Bataan and Corregidor unless all forces in the Philippines surrendered.

4 McGee, *Rice and Salt*, 59.

5 McGee, *Rice and Salt*, 144. Davao Penal Colony, often called Dapecol and later Japanese Prison Camp Number 2 was located on Mindanao near Davao City.

6 McGee, *Rice and Salt*, 184; John D. Lukacs, *Escape from Davao: The Forgotten Story of the Most Daring Prison Break of the Second World War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010) 255. By profession, Fertig was a mining engineer from Colorado who had been commissioned in the Army Corps of Engineers at the start of the war. Used to working with machines, Fertig had no military or leadership experience. Fertig assumed the rank of Brigadier General because he believed that none of the bandits, renegade guerrilla leaders or rank-and-file Filipinos would respect him if he could not make them believe that he was "The One" who could deliver "The Aid."

7 Wendell W. Fertig, Personal Diary (January-December 1943), Box 1, 81, Wendell W. Fertig Collection, The U. S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle Pennsylvania.; McGee, *Rice and Salt*, 184.; Lukacs, *Escape from Davao*, 255; As Lukacs indicates, Fertig harbored a deep resentment against any American that had surrendered, and because he himself had not, had contempt for anyone who did regardless of the circumstances. Believing that anyone who had spent time in a prison camp was damaged goods, Fertig, in his diary and in his own words, referred to those who had escaped from prison camp as 'stir crazy'.

8 John H. McGee military service information, National Personnel Records Center.

9 BG (ret) John H. McGee, letter to Major Shaun M. Darragh, 8 February 1985, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, 6. As McGee explained, "The Miscellaneous Division of the G-3 Section Eighth Army originally was a cover name for a G-3 commanded unit organized to conduct guerrilla warfare. It became more aptly suited to its title by the variey of missions assigned to it."

10 McGee letter to Darragh, 4.

11 McGee letter to Darragh, 6.

12 MAJ William F. Fox, *History of the Korean War, Inter-Allied Cooperation During Combat Operations, Volume III, part 2, section B, 10-11.* MS in OCMH: Letter Order, Headquarters, EUSAK to CG, 2nd Logistics Command, 8 October 1950, "Subject: Establishment of UNRC." Not more than 6,200 troops were expected to be in training at the center at any one time. The first unit to use the facility was the 1st Turkish Armed Forces Command on 18 October 1950.

13 McGee letter to Darragh, 6. This included the Turkish Brigade, the Thai Regiment, the Indian Ambulance Unit, the Dutch Battalion, the French Battalion, the Greek Infantry Battalion, the Ethiopian Battalion, the Belgian Battalion, the Luxembourg Battalion and the Colombian Battalion.

14 McGee letter to Darragh, 9.

15 McGee letter to Darragh, 10-11. The 8086th AU command group was comprised of a commander, an executive officer, an intelligence officer, operations officer, and a signal officer with the supply group located at Pusan.

16 McGee letter to Darragh, 20.

17 McGee, *Rice and Salt*, 24, 27, 30, 44, 170, 171.

ONE Guerrilla's FIGHT

Operating Behind Enemy Lines in the Korean War

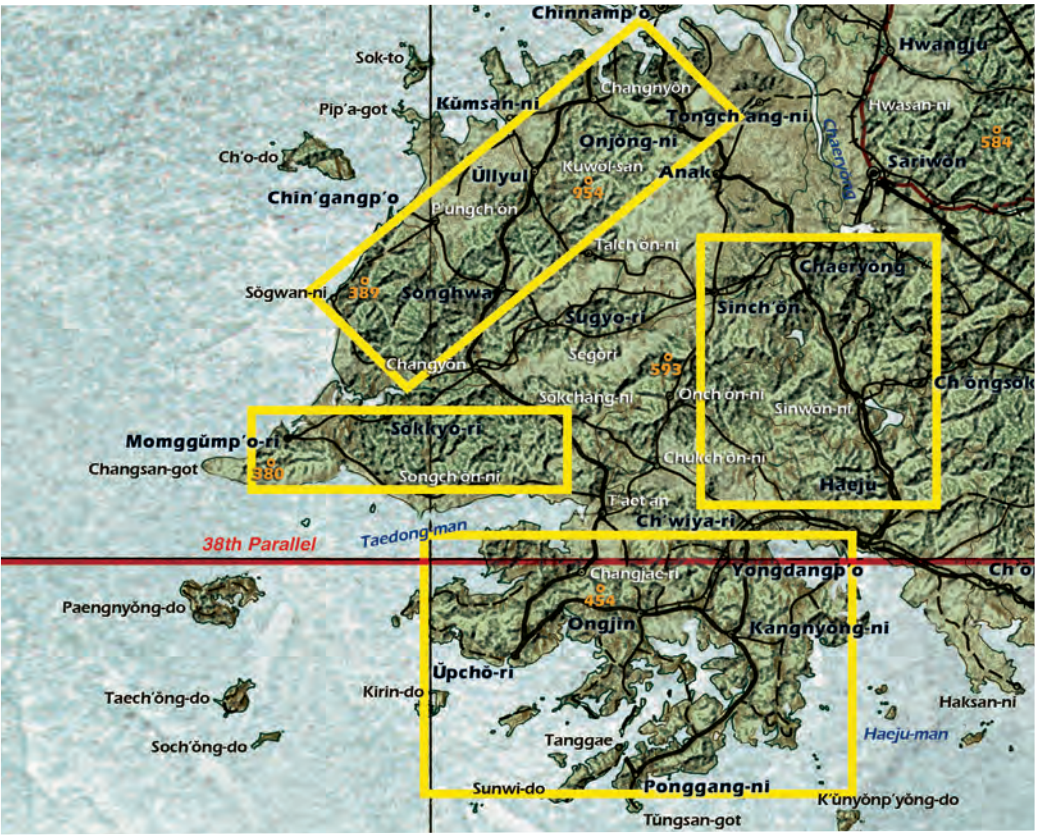
by Michael E. Krivdo

This article describes one of the 4,445 North Korean partisan actions taken against Communist forces during the Korean War.[1] It is written from the guerrillas' perspective to provide insight into their combat engagements; events that were rarely captured in the conventional military historical effort. This viewpoint is important as it allows soldiers today to better understand how these partisans operated behind enemy lines and the limitations and constraints they overcame to remain successful on the battlefield. It reveals the conditions that affected their planning and the conduct of their combat actions. It also shows the importance of the guerrilla's interactions with friends and neighbors who clandestinely supported their activities.

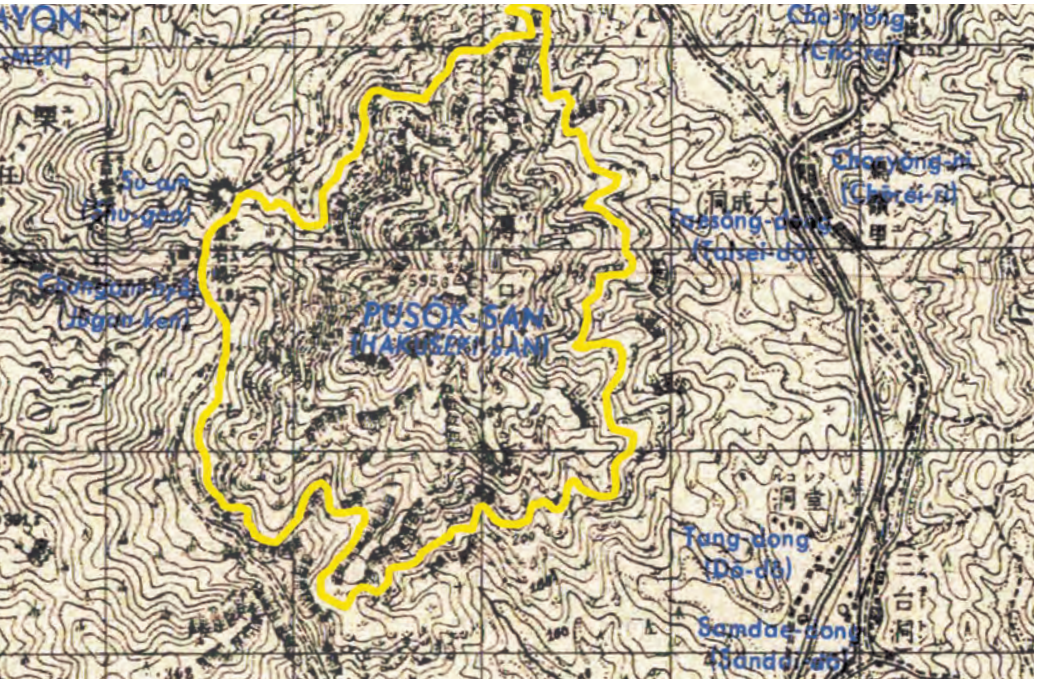
One representative guerrilla action involved Kim Yong Bok, the leader of Donkey 3, a partisan unit operating on the West Coast of North Korea. Kim had been conscripted during World War II and later served as a lieutenant in the Japanese Army in Manchuria, China. After the surrender of Japan in August 1945, Kim worked as a clerk in South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs before returning to his family home in Changyon, Hwanghae Peninsula, North Korea, in late 1946. At that time Communists began seizing private property and Kim's family lost their farm. When North Korea's forced conscription policy started in 1947, he hid in the mountains to avoid being drafted. Many other anti-Communists were doing the same, with the help and assistance of their families and sympathizers.[2]

As UN troops approached his village in October 1950, Kim Yong Bok and his friends emerged from the mountains, formed a village security force, and





Hwanghae and mountain refuge areas around Changyon that harbored guerrillas.



Original tactical map segment showing the steep mountainous terrain of the Donkey 3 enclave on Pusok Mountain in Hwanghae, North Korea.

Kim became the chief of the area's police detachment. When the UN troops withdrew from that region in December, Kim and his men again fled to the hills to avoid capture and probable execution. Like before, sympathetic villagers provided food and supplies for the exiles and also assisted them in escaping the area. One farmer told him the location of a 'wiggle' style (small, one-oar) fishing boat that they had recently fixed for the Communists. Accompanied by a fellow refugee, Kim secured the boat, paddled to the nearby island of Cho-do, and joined a guerrilla unit forming there. After meeting with Major (MAJ) William A. Burke, the commander of the LEOPARD guerrilla base on Paengnyong Island, Kim became the leader of the partisan Donkey 3 unit.[3] This extract from a contemporary interview of his experiences sheds light onto how the Korean partisans operated during the war.

Kim described one representative operation in early 1952 undertaken both to inflict casualties on the enemy behind its own lines and to demonstrate the power and intent of the partisans to the people of the region. At that time, Kim's unit maintained a small, semi-permanent forward base deep in a remote, mountainous part of the Hwanghae Peninsula. His guerrillas were supplied and fed by sympathetic villagers because the Communists were tightening their grip on the farmers in the region. Those same local farmers also provided Kim's men with a good situational awareness of enemy dispositions and movements in the area, giving Donkey 3 some degree of security and also informing them of probable enemy targets. In this particular action, Kim acted on tips from sympathetic supporters and made plans to attack a police station and the town hall in the village of Songhwa, about nine kilometers away. He wanted to destroy the Communist Party infrastructure in that township and kill the North Korean-installed government officials. After finishing his preliminary plan and rehearsals, Kim left his remote camp on Pak-sok Mountain (or Pusok-san) with eleven other guerrillas and patrolled overland toward his target.[4]

Locals had passed him information regarding enemy patrols and checkpoints in the surrounding countryside that helped Kim's unit avoid detection during their movement. Dressed in a mix of civilian clothes and North Korean uniforms, and carrying a varied collection of weapons, the party travelled mostly at night, hiding themselves by day. They crossed several streams and open areas on their way to their target, taking care to

avoid raising any alarm from their movement. Enroute to the objective, the guerrilla chief also hoped to confirm details on the presence and actions of Communist Party and North Korean People's Army (NKPA) members at Songhwa. Nearing the village, Kim's group encountered a hunter, a resident of the village who was not personally known by any of his party. Seeking both to confirm details regarding the enemy situation and to prevent the unknown man from betraying their location, Kim's men seized him and questioned him for the information they needed. Kim recalled that "I captured the hunter and [told him] that I was going to shoot him because he was a Communist. He said he was not a Communist and to please spare his life. So I said that I would spare his life." Not surprisingly, the hunter provided Kim with the information about the enemy disposition, divulging enough to allow the guerrilla to complete his plan of attack.[5]

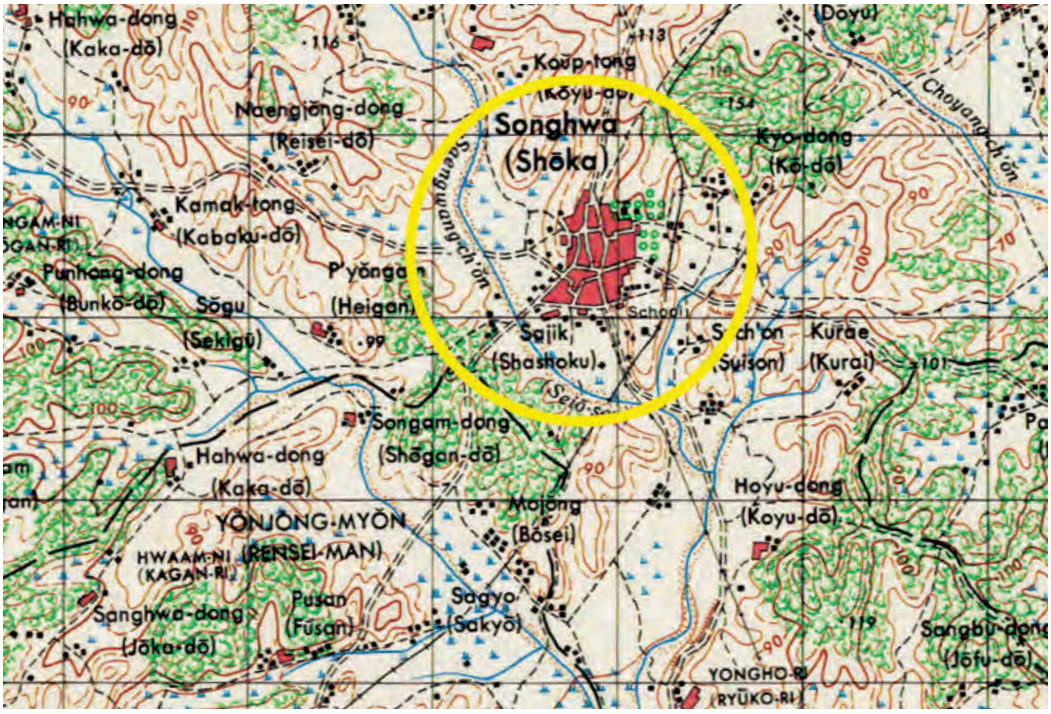
"I captured the hunter and [told him] that I was going to shoot him because he was a Communist. He said he was not a Communist and to please spare his life. So I said that I would spare his life."— Kim Yong Bok, the leader of Donkey 3

With the lives of his men at stake, the cautious partisan leader also took steps to verify the information provided by the hunter. He confirmed its accuracy by comparing it with reports gained from other sources. He "had one radio operator [in Donkey 3] who was quite familiar with the area and what the hunter said [matched] what the radio operator was saying." Furthermore, "To make sure my information was accurate, I called on the chief of the ROK Youth Group [that] had been organized when the UN Forces had advanced into the area. His name was Won Byong Hun, [still living] in the village at that time." Mr. Won confirmed that the information given by the hunter was accurate. In addition, Won and another trusted man joined Kim's unit for the attack, raising the total number of raiders to fourteen.[6]

"I finally reached my destination. There were four [separate targets] that I wanted to hit. One was a police station detachment. One was the Communist Party *Myon* [township] Detachment office, another was the *myon* office [town hall], and the fourth was where a platoon of enemy [troops] stayed in that town." Kim allocated his forces to cover three of the targets, discovering through his sources that the Communist Party office was empty at that time. And after deliberating on the number of guerrillas he had on hand against the small garrison, Kim "decided to cancel my raid on the enemy platoon location because I had too small a number of men to attack the whole platoon." Instead he formed a security element and tasked it to establish a blocking position "in case [the platoon] came to reinforce the police station detachment, which was my main target." Kim also took other measures to prevent the enemy platoon from effectively reacting to his attacks on the police station and *myon* office that will be covered later.[7]

To maintain command and control, Kim personally led the group assigned to attack his primary target at the police station. Moving into their attack positions near midnight, Kim observed that "Six policemen were in the station and many people were gathered" there. Kim emplaced his men, taking care to utilize some large trees around the police station that provided excellent cover and concealment. "At that time our equipment was three carbines, six M1s, one PPSH [Russian sub-machine gun], one Russian light machine gun, . . . one hunting gun and one rifle." One man carried grenades. Now in their firing positions, the guerrillas stood ready until five minutes after midnight, the specified time for the attack.[8]

Kim described the action: "A volley fire took place when three rounds were fired by me as the signal to open fire. Immediately, the windows of the enemy police station detachment were broken and some of the enemy policemen were shot on the spot." Kim's men seized the station, killing most of the police outright and capturing a few. Behind the police station the guerrillas discovered an air raid shelter that the police had converted to a makeshift jail holding thirty-two men, women, and children detained by the Communists. In some of those cases the Communists had incarcerated whole families for the 'crime' of being



Original tactical map section including the location of the Donkey 3 guerrilla raid on the village of Songhwa.

suspected of having sympathies for the guerrilla cause. Kim's men freed the prisoners. In addition, Kim's guerrillas killed eight policemen, and gained "seven rifles such as the Japanese 99 and the Japanese 38, and captured documents and papers."[9] The raid was off to a good start.

On the second objective, synchronizing their attack with Kim's assault on the police station, the second combat element opened fire on the *myon* township hall. That second action produced comparable results: the guerrillas killed a North Korean first lieutenant, the county's Communist "culture propagandist," and six other members of the town's oppressive governing body who had been living in the building. Although one high value target, the chief of the local Communist Court of Law, managed to escape in the confusion of the attack, the partisans had essentially succeeded in decapitating the township's Communist government infrastructure with their bold, two-pronged attack.[10]

Successful raiders always plan carefully for their withdrawal. To prevent the town's garrison platoon from effectively reacting to his men's assault, the resourceful guerrilla chief incorporated a deception plan into his exfiltration. His men had earlier primed several blocks of TNT, not with the intent of destroying anything, but rather "just to make a big noise." To simulate that the guerrillas were armed with heavy weapons, Kim's men also had scattered some expended 40 millimeter brass cartridges over the path that the reacting platoon would take. The deception plan had an audible element as well. "When I ordered the machine gun to fire . . . I said, 'Heavy machine gun, fire!' To the carbine men I said, 'Light machine gun, fire!'" Before his men lobbed grenades or explosives at the enemy, Kim shouted "Mortar, fire!" at the top of his lungs so that the enemy could also hear his command and the resulting explosion, and therefore mistakenly believe that the partisans were stronger and more numerous than they actually were. Although these tricks might not fool veteran ears, they confused the less experienced conscripts such as those garrisoning rear areas.[11]

As Kim recalled, "I burned the *myon* office building completely down," creating confusion and fear throughout the village. "While we were shooting the enemy, blasting the TNT, throwing hand grenades, firing carbines and light machine gun, and shouting the false orders, the one enemy platoon [reacted to our attack and moved] to reinforce the *myon* office. When they heard the false orders they [fell] back and took up defensive positions, which was done in vain because I did not attack them." Instead, taking advantage of the resultant confusion, Kim's men successfully disengaged and withdrew from the area, aided by the several hours of darkness remaining and the keen knowledge of the terrain resident in his men who were born

"A volley fire took place when three rounds were fired by me as the signal to open fire. Immediately, the windows of the enemy police station detachment were broken and some of the enemy policemen were shot on the spot."— Kim Yong Bok



Illustration depicting Kim's guerrillas conducting their night attack on the Songhwa *myon* police station. *(Mariano Santillan)*

"While we were shooting the enemy, blasting the TNT, throwing hand grenades, firing carbines and light machine gun, and shouting the false orders, the one enemy platoon [reacted to our attack and moved] to reinforce the *myon* office. When they heard the false orders they [fell] back and took up defensive positions, which was done in vain because I did not attack them."— Kim Yong Bok

and raised in that region. The partisans employed their intimate familiarity with the area to return to their base of operations undetected. Later, in addition to passing on his report of the action, Kim proudly conveyed that "I had no casualties" in the mission.[12]

For months after this action Kim and the men of Donkey 3 conducted similar small-scale raids and ambushes, launching them from either the relatively secure island base at Cho-do, or from his forward camps located in the mountains of North Korea.[13] By his own account, Kim's unit "participated in [six] surprise raids [and he personally] led ambushes in more than twenty" locations throughout the Hwanghae Peninsula. During an eight-month period, his men reportedly "captured about 55 Russian rifles, 12 PPSH's [submachine guns . . .], 130 oxen, [and] captured approximately 150 bags of rice, including some grain" that nicely supplemented their rations. Donkey 3 also "induced about 23 enemy to surrender . . ., killed approximately 280 [enemy troops], captured four sail junks, destroyed fourteen buildings . . ., and rescued refugees and loyal youth out of the [Communist-held] mainland."[14]

Kim Yong Bok served as the leader of Donkey 3 until February 1952, when he became the commander of the Honor Guard at LEOPARD Base on Paengnyong Island. In that capacity he received two months of additional training and then performed bodyguard and security functions for Major Leo McKean, commander of the base. In addition, he also trained his men in the skills needed to continue as a viable military threat to the enemy.[15]

Accounts of guerrilla combat actions such as this provide valuable insight into how guerrilla forces operate. This single example illustrates guerrilla application of key principles: the importance of gaining the most current information available to support the planning process; the value of surprise; and the utility of developing a creative deception plan to confuse the enemy and facilitate a safe withdraw from the objective area. By studying the combat experiences of guerrilla leaders like Kim Yong Bok, modern Special Operations soldiers can better appreciate the practical problems faced by indigenous irregular military leaders in the conduct of unconventional warfare. They will also realize more clearly the strengths and limitations of guerrilla fighters. That understanding is especially critical for soldiers tasked to train and advise similar units.

Michael Krivdo earned his PhD in Military and Diplomatic History from Texas A&M University. He is a former Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance Officer with varied special operations research interests.

Endnotes

1 Frederick W. Cleaver, George Fitzpatrick, John Ponturo, *et al*., "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea, 1951-1954," AFFE Group Technical Memorandum ORO-T-64, Johns Hopkins University, Operations Research Office, June 1956 (hereafter ORO Study), 13. According to the study, guerrilla units reported about 4,445 combat actions in North Korea between May 1951 and the signing of the Armistice in July 1953. The same source states that 92 percent of the actions were initiated by small groups of 50 men or less. On further analysis, the type of action described in this article, a raid conducted by 11-15 guerrillas, was both the most common type of combat action undertaken by partisan forces, and the most successful (ORO Study, 10-11, 168-69).

2 Interview, A.S. Daley and B.C. Mossman, with Mr. Kim Yong Bok, Donkey 3 Leader, 6 November 1952, included as "The Narrative of the Leader of the Honor Guard, Mr. Kim Yong Bok" (hereafter Kim Yong Bok interview), in 8086th Army Unit, (AFFE) Military History Detachment, "UN Partisan Forces in the Korean Conflict, 1951-1952," Project MHD-3, Center of Military History, Fort McNair, Washington, DC, 114-16. Classified as an elite "student-soldier" by the Japanese Army due to his attendance at the Seoul Law and Political Institute, his superiors designated Kim as an officer candidate. He entered the Sok-Kajang, China, preliminary officer candidate school and graduated as a second lieutenant in the Japanese Army. He was assigned to Manchuria, China, where he served as an infantry officer in the Nobori Division, 2356 Army Unit until the end of World War II. According to LTC Jay D. Vanderpool, commander of the Korean guerrillas in 1951-52, "The partisans were made up primarily of people with military training in the Japanese Army, the Korean Army, the Chinese Army or some army, at the company level." (Senior Officers Oral History Program: Project 83-12, Jay D. Vanderpool, Colonel, USA (Ret.), U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 138).

3 Kim Yong Bok interview, 116.

4 Kim Yong Bok interview, 116.

5 Kim Yong Bok interview, 122-23.

6 Kim Yong Bok interview, 122-23. The transcribed account misspells 'Song-Hwa' as 'Song-Ha' throughout. See source location document: "Special Interrogation of Hwanghae Do Volunteers," Headquarters, EUSA Korea, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, 164th Military Intelligence Service Detachment, 164-MISDI-1388, 20 January 1951, copy in "UN Partisan Operations," 62-64.

7 Kim Yong Bok interview, 123-24.

8 Kim Yong Bok interview, 124.

9 Kim Yong Bok interview, 124-25, quotes from text; "Report of Guerrilla Operations," Headquarters, Combined Command for Reconnaissance Activities, Korea (CCRAK), 8240th Army Unit, 3 May 1952, Record Group (RG) 349, Entry 95C, Box 31 (CCRAK) "Guerrilla Summary CCRAK 8240th AU 1-92" 1952, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD, 2.

10 Kim Yong Bok interview, 125, quote from text.

11 Kim Yong Bok interview, 125, quotes from text.

12 Kim Yong Bok interview, 125.

13 ORO Study, 12-15. According to the study, the majority of the Korean partisan units took advantage of the Allied naval and air superiority to utilize offshore islands as sanctuaries to train and refit in a fairly safe environment. Once ready, the guerrillas moved ashore into remote enclaves to plan and conduct small scale raids and attacks. Kim Yong Bok's unit actions follow that general pattern.

14 Kim Yong Bok interview, 122.

15 Kim Yong Bok interview, 125.



TLO

Line-Crossers, Special Forces, and the "Forgotten War"

by Eugene G. Piasecki

"I had a very strong desire to do something . . . It is my country and I want to restore freedom in my country."[1]

— Miss Shim Yong Hae, TLO

At the end of World War II, the Korean Peninsula was divided at the 38th Parallel separating Communist North Korea from an American-supported South Korea. The consequences of this division and its repercussions were best summarized by President Harry S. Truman in 1946 when he stated that Korea became "an ideological battleground upon which our entire success in Asia may depend."[2] Initially occupied by the U.S. Army's XXIV Corps, South Korea stabilized to the point that by 25 January 1949, the Corps was inactivated and replaced by the reactivated 5th Regimental Combat Team and the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG).[3] Although KMAG's primary purpose was to create and advise the Korean Constabulary and the fledgling Republic of Korea Army (ROKA), it also became a point for gathering information about North Korean activities. It soon became apparent to the Far East Command's (FEC) intelligence staffs that neither KMAG nor the military attaché group in the American embassy in Seoul were properly staffed or prepared to monitor and report on the increased North Korean troop movements and activities of Communist guerrillas operating in the South. In 1949 on his own initiative, Major General (MG) Charles A. Willoughby, the FEC G-2, activated a Korean surveillance detachment called the Korean Liaison Office (KLO) to fill this void.[4]



XXIV Corps SSI

Comprised mostly of native Korean human intelligence (HUMINT) agents trained to identify sources and collect raw information, there were also Americans involved in KLO operations. Among the earliest of these was First Lieutenant (1LT) Chester E. Carpenter of the 971st Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) Detachment.[5] As an intelligence officer focused on Korea, 1LT Carpenter reported that the Communist-equipped and trained North Korean People's Army (NKPA) was on the verge of invading South Korea. Based on the significance of this discovery, a series of KLO reports emphasizing the threat began appearing in Washington, DC, in December 1949 and continued through 19 June 1950. Collated and interpreted by Army G-2 analysts, they concluded that North Korean forces (NK) were steadily moving south towards the 38th Parallel.

The general Western distrust of Oriental agents and belief that South Koreans were "prone to cry wolf" resulted in 'other' American intelligence sources failing to capitalize on these warnings until it was too late and the NKPA had invaded South Korea, placing the United States in the middle of its first 'undeclared war.'[6] This attitude toward the value and reliability of HUMINT sources persisted in FEC until January 1951 when the G-3 Miscellaneous Division, Eighth U. S. Army (EUSA) recognized the potential to employ anti-Communist Koreans willing to fight against NKPA and Chinese Communist Forces (CCF).[7] The purpose of this article is to focus on one specific case in which early Special Forces (SF) Course graduates used their individual skills to support a conventional U. S. Army HUMINT collection effort as members of the 8240th Army Unit (AU) Tactical Liaison Office (TLO). Additionally, it addresses the assignment of selected SF personnel to the 7th Infantry Division (ID) in March 1953.

Determined to keep the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and its operatives away from General (GEN) MacArthur's wartime planning, the FEC staff in Tokyo managed its own information gathering efforts as part of its Intelligence Directorate (FEC G-2). The subsequent unconventional warfare organizations of FEC originated from this arrangement, and by 15 January 1951 also included the Attrition (Guerrilla) Section of the Miscellaneous Division of EUSA, G-3. Headed by Colonel (COL) John H. McGee and his assistant, Major (MAJ) William A. Burke, part of the Miscellaneous Division's responsibility was to reorient KLO missions to concentrate on obtaining more tactical and less strategic intelligence.[8] Following the mid-1951 fighting front stabilization, combat operations became less fluid and began to change from the active offense to a more static defense. This reorientation of mission focus soon resulted in creating Tactical Liaison Offices (TLO). Although initially manned by anti-Communist Koreans, the TLO would eventually return to its early-war concept of conducting line-crossing operations which included using Chinese agent 'line-crossers' to supplement existing efforts.[9]



Major General Charles A. Willoughby, FEC G-2

Assigned to each front-line U.S. Army infantry and Marine Corps division, TLOs were comprised of small teams of Americans (officer and enlisted) and approximately twenty-five non-Western agents.[10] One of the first teams, assigned to the 1st Marine Division, was temporarily led by 1LT Douglas C. Dillard from July to August 1952. 1LT Dillard's tour was characterized by the way he efficiently dispatched, recovered, and debriefed three line-crossing teams per week. This was due to the solid TLO-Marine standard operating procedures established by CPT William Shea.[11] In contrast to American units, ROKA units did not employ TLOs. This was because the South Korean soldiers viewed the men who volunteered to become line-crossers as ROKA draft dodgers and would fire upon them when they knew TLO agents were in front of their lines on a mission.[12]

On the other hand, American TLO agent handlers soon realized that Korean children, teenagers, and women (with or without babies) made the best agents. Two cases highlight the effectiveness of operatives selected from these groups. The first was former teenage KLO Team GOAT agent, Richard K. Hong, who eventually became a member of the 24th Infantry Division (ID) TLO team. Wearing North Korean student clothes and carrying an appropriate identification card, Hong moved freely behind enemy lines and noted the locations of enemy weapons stockpiles, supply depots and troop concentrations as targets for American bombing missions.[13] The second, Shim Yong Hae, a sixteen year-old female with the 25th ID TLO, conducted missions every twenty days to verify information obtained from other sources.[14]

Focusing on tactical intelligence gathering, the TLOs represented the earliest effort and lowest level of HUMINT gatherers in Korea. TLOs staffed with agents like Hong and Shim were considered by some intelligence officers to be little more than glorified reconnaissance units who had high casualty rates and produced unsatisfactory intelligence.[15] This generalization did not take into account that once they were forward of friendly lines, line-crossers faced the constant dangers of death, capture, and torture because they traveled by foot and dressed either as civilian refugees or enemy soldiers. They also carried no visible

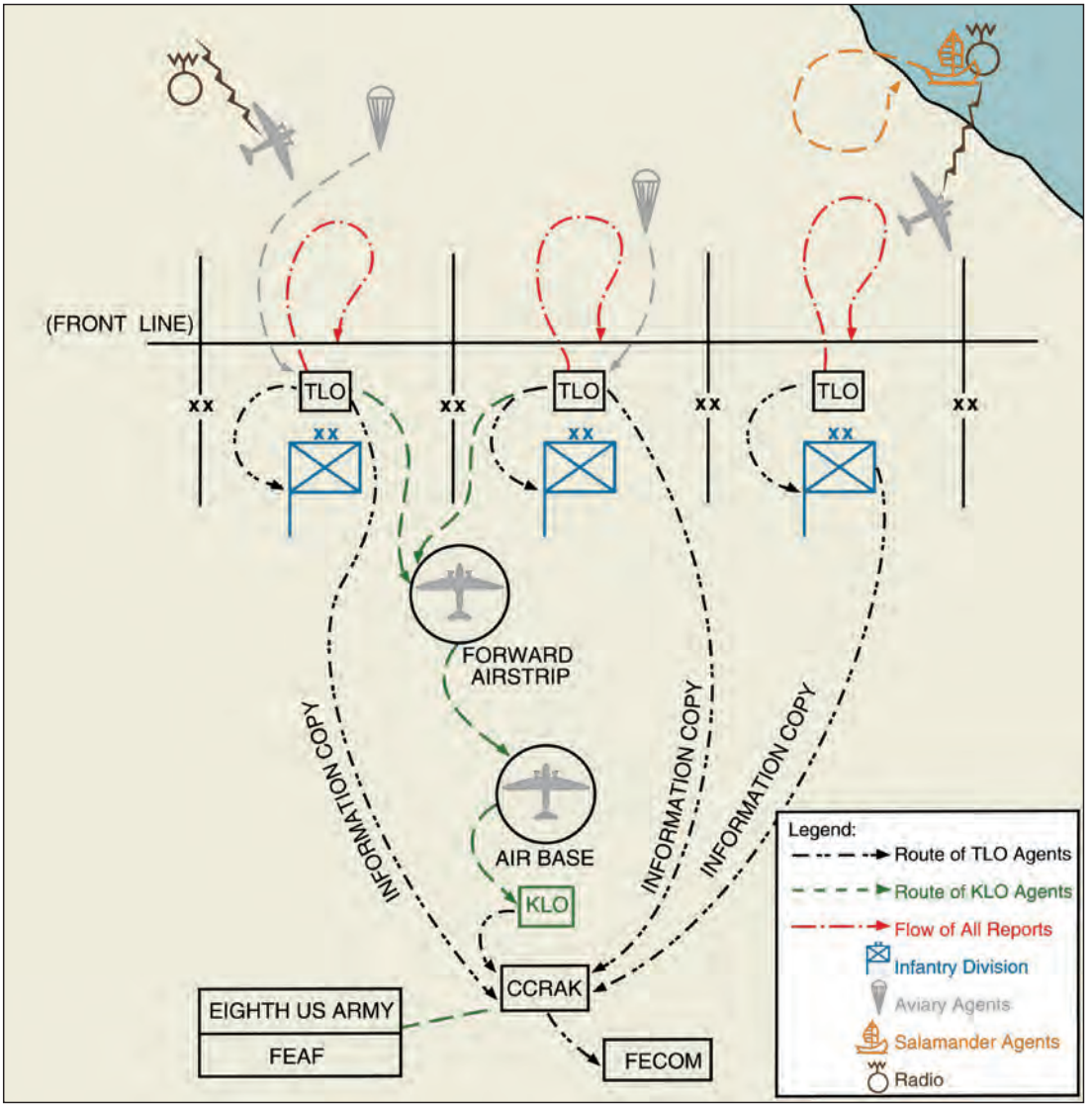
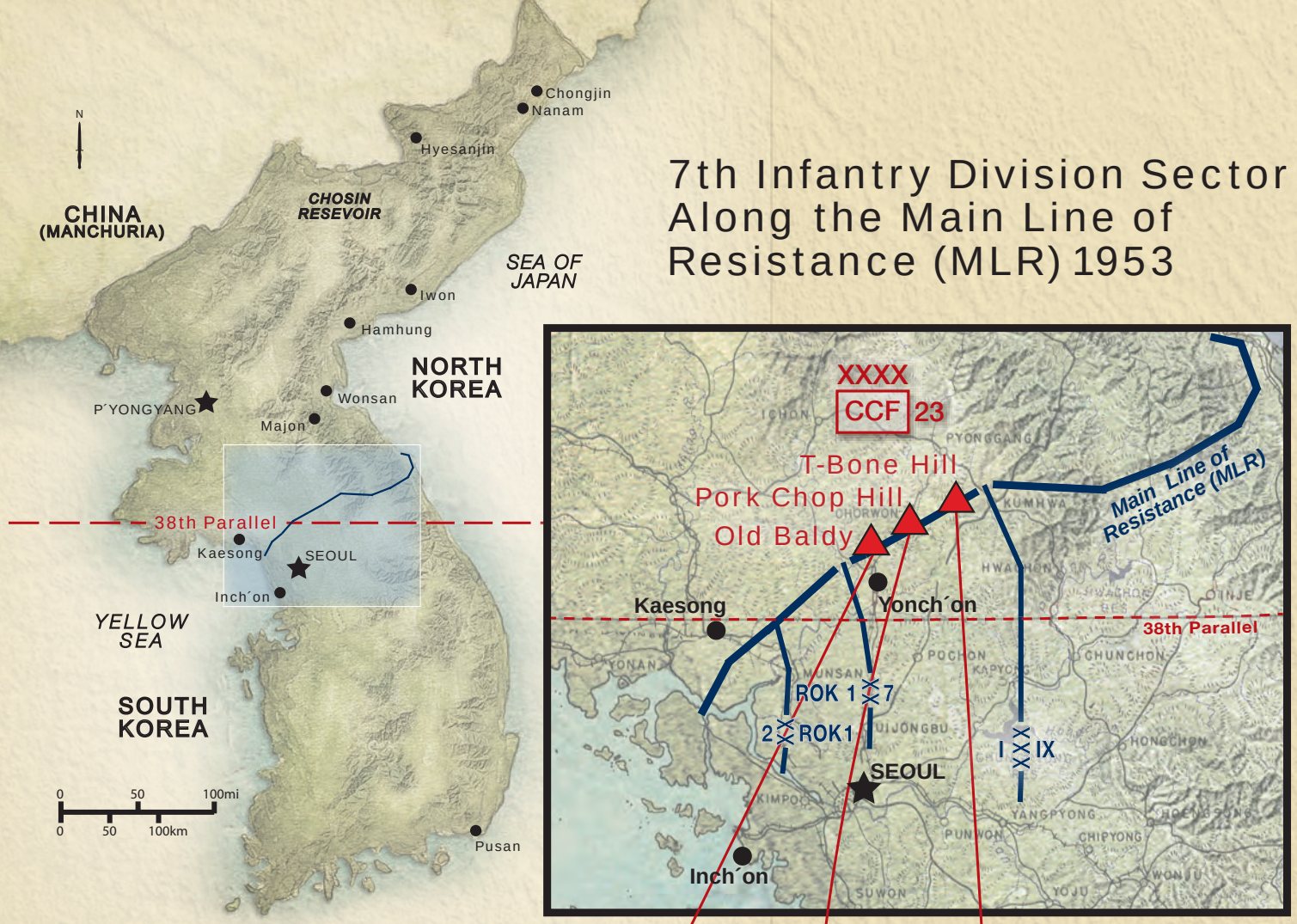


Diagram showing the relationship between TLO agents, the divisions they supported, and the presence of other partisans gathering intelligence on the battlefield. Source: Garth Stevens, Frank Bush, Robert Brewer, Jefferson Capps, and Charles Simmons, *Intelligence Information by Partisans for Armor*, 2 volumes (Fort Knox, KY: Armored Officer Advanced Course, 1952), 29.

7th Infantry Division Sector Along the Main Line of Resistance (MLR) 1953



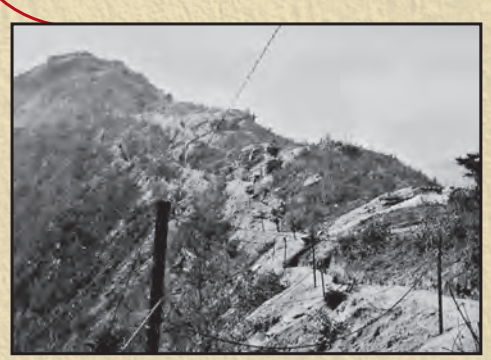


Old Baldy



T-Bone Hill





(Left and above) 7th Infantry Division trenches, July 1953. Officially it was designated Hill 255, but contour lines on a map of Korea and a 1959 film made it famous as Pork Chop Hill. *(National Archives)*

means of identification and concentrated their efforts in the most dangerous twenty-mile-deep band of 'no-man's-land' between Communist and allied front-line positions.[16] Various division intelligence operations took advantage of the front-line fluidity during the early days of the war and their TLOs were credited with gathering and providing information to the Eighth Army that helped save it from defeat while defending the Pusan Perimeter.[17]

Capitalizing on their mobility and anonymity, in September and October 1950, line-crossing assets continued to prove their effectiveness as they supported forces moving north from the Inch'on landings by reporting the locations of bypassed enemy soldiers, hidden weapons caches, and North Korean strong points.[18] These early efforts established the precedent for later organization of the TLO structure. TLOs continued to exploit their relatively unsophisticated brand of HUMINT operations until the summer of 1951 when the situation in Korea changed and the front lines stabilized, taking on the characteristics of WWI trench warfare.

The decision to strengthen the EUSA defensive lines and confine its offensive actions to limited advances ended the fluid phase of the Korean War and started a new period that had far-reaching impacts from the Korean Peninsula back to the United States.[19] As U.S. Army general purpose forces were committed to battles to gain control of Korea's high ground, the EUSA Miscellaneous Division under COL McGee experienced realignments and changes that modified their combat and intelligence collecting capabilities. The first of these initiatives established the Guerrilla Section, EUSA Miscellaneous Division, as an independent organization [designated as the 8086th Army Unit (AU)] on 5 May 1951. On 10 December 1951, the 8086th AU fell under the Far East Command Liaison Detachment, Korea [FEC/LD (K)], 8240th AU. This change made all partisan operations responsible to the Guerrilla Division. It also consolidated TLO operations under the Combined Command Reconnaissance Activities Korea (CCRAK), [AU = TDA].[20]

Meanwhile, back in the United States, Brigadier General (BG) Robert A. McClure, Chief of the Office of Psychological Warfare (OCPW) in the Pentagon, established the U.S. Army Psychological Warfare Center (PWC) on Smoke Bomb Hill at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. As part of the PWC, a new organization called Special Forces (SF) was being created from an all-volunteer group of combat veterans and those who wanted more of a challenge than the garrison-oriented Army offered. In November 1952, eager to demonstrate SF's capabilities, BG McClure actively pursued efforts to send newly-qualified SF soldiers to Korea. In early 1953, his repeated attempts finally succeeded and FEC requested fifty-five officers and nine enlisted men from the recently-activated 10th Special Forces Group (SFG).[21] However, FEC assigned the SF soldiers as individual replacements and not as members of operational teams. Eager to demonstrate that the SF concept had not been a waste of time and resources, Special Forces-qualified soldiers first reported to the 8240th AU for combat duty in Korea in March 1953.[22]



7th ID TLO Team top to bottom: SFC Blademar S. Navejar, CPL Russell A. Shafer, MSG John E. Kessling, CPT Charles R. Bushong. SFC Navejar was not SF qualified, but provided operational continuity for incoming SF personnel.

Among the earliest SF arrivals was Second Lieutenant (2LT) George W. 'Speedy' Gaspard, a graduate of the first Special Forces Course at Fort Bragg, NC.[23] Arriving in the first shipment of SF-qualified men in early March 1953, 2LT Gaspard, a World War II veteran of the 6th Marine Division, was not new to combat. But he soon discovered that the 8240th presented him with operational challenges that he had not anticipated. One of these, that posed a constant threat throughout his TLO team assignments in the 2nd, 40th, and 45th Infantry Divisions, was the possibility that a line-crosser was a 'double-agent' even though he had been vetted by that particular division's intelligence staff. Once discovered, these suspected 'doubles' were placed under the watchful eye of the TLO camp's Korean First Sergeant where they remained until hostilities ended.[24] 2LT Gaspard remained a TLO team leader until he was transferred to TLO headquarters to become the adjutant on 26 September 1953.[25]

Arriving in Korea after 2LT Gaspard were Captain (CPT) Charles R. Bushong, First Lieutenant (1LT) Alvin L. O'Neal, Master Sergeant (MSG) John E. Kessling, and Corporal (CPL) Russell A. Shafer. Assigned to the TLO, 7th ID on 3 March 1953, CPT Bushong was followed by 1LT O'Neal, MSG Kessling, and CPL Shafer. While assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division, MSG Kessling volunteered for SF because he "wanted to fill his obligation as a soldier and go to combat," and he remembered his assignment to the TLO as anything but ordinary.[26] Arriving at Camp Stoneman, CA, from Fort Bragg, NC, for overseas processing, MSG Kessling



8240th AU Headquarters in Seoul was a Presbyterian mission school. Living quarters were located on the second floor.



CPL Russell A. Shafer manning the .50 caliber machine gun mounted at the left front corner of the mess tent/ armament bunker.

received no orientation briefings. Instead, he was placed on a civilian flight in San Francisco, CA, and finally arrived at the FEC replacement detachment at Camp Drake, Japan after stops in Hawaii and Guam. While at Camp Drake, MSG Kessling attended a two-week "intelligence school," described as "briefings and made up stuff," and then flew to K-9 airfield at Pusan, Korea, in a *Flying Tiger* C-47 aircraft.[27]

Not SF-qualified, Private First Class (PFC) Russell A. Shafer's experience was somewhat different. Having already been promoted to Staff Sergeant (SSG) in the New York Army National Guard (NYARNG), and as a graduate of the Infantry School's Light and Heavy Weapons course at Fort Benning, GA in 1951, Shafer wanted a discharge from the NYARNG so he could enlist in the Regular Army. Because the NYARNG had frozen all equipment and personnel assets anticipating Federalization, Shafer moved to Lawton, OK. There, with the help of an uncle (a Regular Army Warrant Officer stationed at Fort Sill), he accomplished his goal in 1952. Now a Regular Army PFC, Shafer volunteered for Korea after successfully completing the Field Artillery Weapons Maintenance School at Fort Sill, traveling to Japan by troopship from Fort Lewis, WA.

Assigned to FEC/LD(K), Shafer waited in a Tokyo 'safe house' until he could be flown in a U. S. Army De Havilland, L-20 *Beaver* aircraft to the 7th ID airfield at K-16 outside Seoul, Korea.[28] Finally arriving at Headquarters, 8240th AU, Shafer became a mechanic in the motor pool because of his previous automotive mechanic experience rather than receiving a front-line assignment. As he later recalled, "after three days of herding Korean mechanics, I went to the commander and requested to be sent out to one

of the TLO units . . . which he honored saying 'all you guys want to be nutso!'"[29] Shafer, Bushong, and Kessling soon began conducting operations from the 7th ID's Tactical Liaison Office in the 32nd Infantry Regimental sector.[30]

Known by its cover name as the Army Geographical Survey Group (8097 AU), the TLO was really a separate intelligence gathering organization within the 7th ID. Segregated from the majority of the division's other elements, but not completely isolated or enclosed by barbed wire, the TLO area consisted of five tents located near one of the 7th ID 105 mm howitzer field artillery units and about a half-hour drive from division headquarters. Intended to be indistinguishable from the other tents in the area, the individual functions performed in each tent made them unique. The first tent, occupied exclusively by the Americans, served as their living and working area and the second and third provided temporary housing for the Korean/Chinese agents conducting pre-mission preparation. The fourth became the unit mess facility and the last, reinforced by sandbags, held the TLO weapons and ammunition.[31]

While the Americans represented the permanent front-line TLO presence, the line-crossers were an entirely different category. To lessen their chances of recognition or compromise before they started their missions, individual TLO agents were isolated in an 8240 AU safe house in Seoul run by CPT Ira C. Feldman, a Quartermaster Corps officer assigned to Intelligence Operations duties. Feldman ensured that the backgrounds and credentials of the individual agent were vetted, and that they received the intelligence training and skills necessary to accomplish their tasks. Once Feldman was satisfied the agents were prepared for the mission, they were dressed in either Chinese or NKPA army uniforms depending on their nationality, loaded into an American three-quarter ton enclosed ambulance sent from the TLO to Seoul, picked up at the safe house, and returned back to the TLO unit the night before they crossed the lines.[32] There, CPT Bushong took charge of the operation. He gave the agents a more detailed orientation and operational briefing, an explanation of their mission, and what they were expected to accomplish. He also ensured they had the necessary weapons, equipment, and ammunition, were fed and given some additional cooked rice, and allowed to rest before they were taken forward. As Kessling and Shafer both recalled, when the agents arrived at the TLO base camp they were considered trained and ready to cross the lines.[33]

As the Special Forces men soon discovered, dispatching agents was a considerably more complex task than just having them walk across and return from enemy front lines. In the case of the 7th ID TLO, all agent activities were conducted at night and coordinated through G-2 Intelligence channels. Procedurally, two American agent handlers, one leading and one in the rear, would escort two line-crossers to the furthest forward friendly listening post along the main line of resistance (MLR). There, the TLOs were instructed to move slowly forward out of small arms range, and wait until just before daybreak before moving toward their objectives.[34] Having accomplished this, the Americans reported to the forward unit's S-2 (intelligence section) who notified the division G-2 that the agents had been dispatched and were active. Upon mission completion, line-crossers were instructed to return during daylight to a prearranged point along the same unit lines from which they departed from with their weapons above their heads and shouting "TLO, TLO."[35] Once secured by friendly forces, the agents were taken to the American TLOs, who then escorted them to the S-2. Once the S-2 informed the G-2 that "there was a package from the TLO," the agents were transported back to the safe house in Seoul for debriefing by 7th Counterintelligence Corps Detachment (CIC) personnel as quickly as possible.[36]

As dangerous as line crossing operations could be in enemy territory, the time spent in the presence of friendly forces could be just as hazardous. Dressed in enemy



7th Infantry Division SSI



32nd Infantry Regiment DUI



32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th ID Command Post (CP) along the MLR.



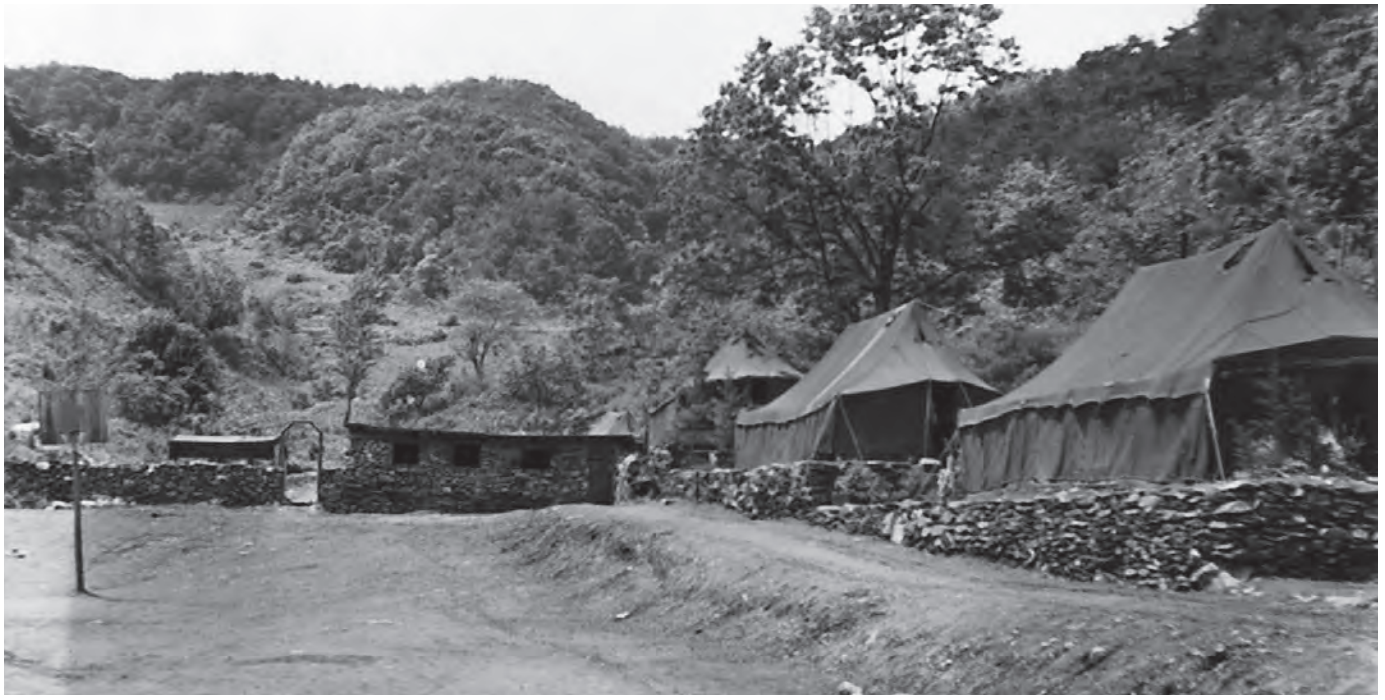
The TLO mess tent was placed on top of the sand-bagged arms and ammo tent/bunker between the American and agent tents.



Front view of the mess hall and armament bunker. This was located between the American and agent living/office areas. Note .50 caliber machine gun position barely visible at the left front.

uniforms and carrying enemy weapons, speaking only pidgin English, often without any formal identification, and either not given or not understanding the purpose of a challenge and password, line-crossers were frequently mistaken for enemy soldiers and killed or wounded by friendlies before their identity could be confirmed.[37] In the case of the 7th ID TLOs this situation was compounded by the fact that on more than one occasion line-crossers were dispatched through that portion of the MLR assigned to the Ethiopian Battalion. Attached to the 7th ID since June 1951, the Ethiopians had proven their ferocity in battle, but had one major shortcoming. Other than their officers who had studied in England and knew English, the majority of the enlisted men and non-commissioned officers manning the MLR spoke only enough English to recognize passwords.[38] This made returning through Ethiopian lines particularly hazardous.

On 27 July 1953, military delegates from the United Nations Command (UNC), the NKPA, and the Chinese People's Volunteers signed an armistice that resulted in a cease fire. The document also created a four-kilometer wide demilitarized zone (DMZ) between Communist and UN forces along the 38th Parallel and meant that most of the conventional American combat forces would return to the United States.[39] The opposite was true for the majority of the Special Forces men, including the 7th ID TLO. According to MSG Kessling, "after the Armistice we took as many precautions with our line-crossers as before as we continued to send TLOs into the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and beyond."[40] Special Forces soldiers performed their assigned missions in Korea throughout the remainder of 1953 and until the 8240th's last official mission (Operation CAMEL) was completed in February 1954.



TLO Area in the 32nd Infantry Regiment sector. Agent quarters were located in the last two tents on the right. American living and office areas occupied the first tent on the right.

The Kagnew Battalion



Ethiopian Combat Infantry Badge

The Imperial Ethiopian Expeditionary Force was one of sixteen United Nations member states that contributed forces in the Korean War. Comprised of volunteers from Emperor Haile Selassie's 1st Division Imperial Bodyguard, three successive battalions served in Korea for one year at a time between June 1951 and April 1954. Known as the Kagnew Battalion, the first unit arrived in Korea on 6 May 1951.[41] With only rudimentary combat training and no weapons or equipment, it was sent to the UN Reception Center at Taegu for eight weeks of additional preparation, training, and equipping before being attached to the 7th Infantry Division and forming its right flank for the remainder of the conflict.[42] After this rather slow start, the Kagnew Battalion proved its worth in combat. Credited with fighting in 238 engagements, the total Kagnew casualties were 121 killed and 536 wounded. No Kagnew soldiers were ever taken prisoner, and the body of every Ethiopian soldier killed in action was recovered from the battlefield. These qualities earned them not only the respect of their American counterparts, but also the belief among the North Koreans and Chinese that the Ethiopians were some type of super-human soldiers.[43]

Ethiopian 75mm Recoilless Rifle crew from Addis Ababa. L R: CPL Alema Welde, CPL Chanilo Bala, and SGM Bogale Weldeynse. Attached to the 7th ID, the Kagnew Battalion became part of the UN forces that occupied positions along the MLR.



7th ID TLO team at the time of the Armistice on 27 July 1953. L-R: 1LT Alvin L. O'Neal, MSG John E. Kessling, CPL Russell A. Shafer. 1LT O'Neal replaced CPT Charles R. Bushong.



Line Crosser Badge

POSTSCRIPT

Although Special Forces soldiers were dispatched to Korea after the battle lines had stabilized, several issues concerning mission preparation and employment were identified. These included:

- SF soldiers had been trained to operate as members of a team, but were assigned, employed, and rotated to units as individuals with seemingly little regard for military occupation specialty or skills.
- The in-bound personnel received no Korean history, cultural orientation, or language preparation training prior to employment.
- In-country interpreter screening and hiring became the responsibility of the TLO element conducting operations.
- Members of one division's TLO unit had no contact with TLOs in other units, and therefore, no way to compare lessons learned.
- TLO team members received little or no mission training before becoming operational.
- At tour completion, neither 8240th personnel, the Psywar Center, nor the Special Forces Department conducted any oral or written mission debriefings.

The author would like to extend his special thanks and appreciation to CSM (retired) John E. Kessling, former Corporal Russell A. Shafer, and Mr. Pedro Feliciano for their contributions, patience and assistance, in preparing this article.

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Endnotes

1 Miss Shim Yong Hae, TLO (25 ID): early 1951 to Spring 1954, interview by Dr. Richard L. Kiper, 4 November 2003, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

2 Walter G. Hermes, *United States Army in the Korean War, Truce Tent and Fighting Front* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1966), 7.

3 John B. Wilson, *Army Lineage Series: Armies, Corps, Divisions, and Separate Brigades* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History United States Army, 1987), 112-113. James F. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1992), 50. The XXIV Corps was initially commanded by Lieutenant General (LTG) John R. Hodge who was followed by Major General (MG) John B. Coulter. The major units of the XXIV Corps were the 6th, 7th, and 40th Infantry Divisions. Major Robert K. Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2000), 37. The XXIV Corps was replaced by the reactivated 5th Regimental Combat Team (RCT) comprised of the U.S. 32nd Infantry Regiment, the 48th Field Artillery Battalion, an engineer company, and the 7th Mechanized Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop. The 5th RCT had returned to Hawaii by June 1949.

4 Schnabel, *The First Year*, 62. The KLO was originally known as the Korean Labor Organization, and formed as an anti-Communist political entity.

5 Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Chester E. Carpenter, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 1 April 2006, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. Initially assigned to the 971st CIC Detachment from 1948-1949, he would return to Korea in 1950 and serve with both the 25th ID and 2nd ID TLOs until he left Korea in June 1951. For his service with the 2ID, Carpenter was awarded the Bronze Star for outstanding combat intelligence support to the 2nd ID.

6 Schnabel, *The First Year*, 62-64; P. K. Rose, "Two Strategic Intelligence Mistakes in Korea, 1950," Central Intelligence Agency, 8 June 2011, https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/, accessed 8 June 2011.

7 Frederick W. Cleaver, George Fitzpatrick, John Ponturo, *et al.*, "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea, 1951-1954," AFFE Group Technical Memorandum ORO-T-64, Johns Hopkins University, Operations Research Office, June 1956 (hereafter ORO Study), 3, 154.

8 "Short Chronology of the Unconventional Warfare Campaign 1950-1954," Unconventional Warfare Campaign, 14 April 2010, http://www.korean-war.com/warfarecampaign.html, 2, accessed 14 April 2010.

9 Michael E. Haas, In *the Devil's Shadow: UN Special Operations During the Korean War* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2000) 15-16.

10 Ben S. Malcom with Ron Martz, *White Tigers: My Secret War in North Korea* (Washington: Brassey's, 1996), 138-139. While starting with North and South Koreans, TLO agents eventually included Chinese defectors after November 1950. Depending on their location, mission, and activity and requirements American TLO Teams were comprised of three to five personnel.

11 COL (retired) Douglas C. Dillard, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 8 June 2012, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. 1LT Dillard was sent to the 1st Marine Division TLO to enable CPT Shea to take leave because he had voluntarily extended his tour of duty in Korea.

12 Haas, In *the Devil's Shadow,* 16.

13 Mr. Richard K. Hong, KLO Goat and TLO 24th ID, March 1951-February 1954, interview by Dr. Richard L. Kiper, 31 October 2003, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. KLO Team GOAT was the name of one of the Korean Liaison Office Human Intelligence Detachments (HID). Comprised of approximately thirty agents, Team GOAT's mission was to collect information about NKPA supply routes, unit identifications, morale, and unit military training.

14 Miss Shim Yong Hae, Interview, 4 November 2003.

15 Ann Bray, John P. Finnegan, and James L. Gilbert, *In the Shadow of The Sphinx: A History of Army Counterintelligence* (Fort Belvoir, Virginia: Office of Strategic Management and Information, US Army Intelligence and Security Command, 2003), 113.

16 Haas, *In the Devil's Shadow*, 16.

17 Bray, Finnegan, and Gilbert, *In the Shadow of the Sphinx*, 113.

18 Haas, *In the Devil's Shadow*, 17.

19 Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front*, 73.

20 Ed Evanhoe, "United Nations Special Operations in Korea, United Nations Partisan Infantry Korea, 8240th AU, February 1951 to February 1954, 4 June 2004," www.militaryphotos.net/forums/showthread.php?1384, accessed 4 June 2011. By the time CCRAK was established and operational, COL McGee had been replaced by LTC Jay D. Vanderpool on 11 June 1951. LTC Vanderpool, like McGee, had gained his guerrilla warfare experience in the Philippines during WWII and had been assigned to the Far East Command G-2 Section before replacing COL McGee.

21 Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., *US Army Special Warfare Its Origins: Psychological and Unconventional Warfare, 1942-1952* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1982). 107. Eventually this number increased, and in the end, seventy-seven officers and twenty-two enlisted Special Forces soldiers would serve in Korea. The heart of the 10th Special Forces Group was the Operational Detachment. This was a fifteen-man unit based upon the original OSS Operational Group. Early SF training stressed individual skills such as Operations and Intelligence (O & I); light and heavy weapons; demolitions; radio communications; and medical aid. NOTE: Each man was trained in a primary skill, but 'cross-trained' in others.

22 "Orders assigning 10th Special Forces Group personnel to US Army Forces Far East Korea in 1953," DA Order TAG 14357, DA Order TAG 16679, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

23 BG (retired) George W. Gaspard, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 5 February 2010, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. During his tour of duty with the 40th ID, 2LT Gaspard was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action on 11 and 12 June 1953 and the Bronze Star for meritorious service as an intelligence specialist.

24 Gaspard interview, 12 February 2010.

25 Gaspard interview, 5 February 2010. The 8097th AU, also known as the Geographic Survey Group, was the unclassified designation of the TLO.

26 CSM (retired) John E. Kessling, 7th Infantry Division TLO, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe and Eugene G. Piasecki, 24 March 2009, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

27 Kessling interview, 24 March 2009.

28 Russell A. Shafer, 7th Infantry Division TLO, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 27 April 2010, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

29 Russell A. Shafer, 7th ID TLO, e-mail to Eugene G. Piasecki, 10 July 2011, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

30 Kessling interview, 24 March 2009. Also part of the TLO, but not SF-qualified was Sergeant First Class (SFC) Blademar S. Navejar, a Native American from Oklahoma nicknamed 'Chief.' Kessling and Navejar, known by their team code name of '777' were most often the ones paired together to perform line-crosser escort duties.

31 Kessling interview, 24 March 2009, Shafer interview, 27 April 2010. Tent furnishings included cots, mosquito nets, heaters, chairs, and tables.

32 Kessling interview, 9 July 2011. CPT Feldman, the safe house Officer-in-Charge (OIC), spoke two Chinese dialects fluently and gave each agent a separate and complete briefing and orientation prior to leaving Seoul. Since some of the agents were Chinese or North Korean turncoats Feldman was always very concerned and on the lookout for double agents.

33 Kessling interview, 24 March 2009, Shafer interview, 27 April 2010. CPT Bushong was replaced by 1LT O'Neal in April 1953 after MSG Kessling had arrived at the 7th ID TLO. Chinese uniforms and identification booklets were provided to individual agents by American Graves Registration (GREG) personnel.

34 Kessling interview, 24 March 2009. Despite the fact that agents had been vetted prior to leaving the Seoul safe house, the American TLOs devised their own system of checks and balances to verify information from returning agents. Once the first two agents were sent out from what was called the MLR left, two days later two more agents were sent out from the MLR right. Both pairs were dispatched to the same objective and upon return; their after-action reports were compared as a way of confirming the information obtained at the safe house debriefing.

35 Kessling interview, 26 July 2011. According to MSG Kessling, the agents had no exact time to return except to ensure that it was during daylight, and from the vicinity of the unit from which they had been dispatched.

36 Kessling interview, 24 March 2009. According to an email received from Thomas N. Hauser, staff historian at the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command on 27 June 2011, this seventeen-man unit supported the 7th ID throughout the war. *In The Shadow of the Sphinx* credits CIC Detachments with collecting order-of-battle information and conducting reconnaissance missions (p. 114). MSG Kessling confirmed that agents were never debriefed by unit S-2 or G-2 personnel.

37 Haas, *In the Devil's Shadow*, 17.

38 Malcom, *White Tigers*, 139. During his 11-month tour of duty MSG Kessling dispatched 119 agents with only two casualties. These were young Chinese mistakenly killed by Ethiopian soldiers of the Kagnew Battalion attached to the 7th ID. MSG Kessling further stated that while a member of the 7th ID TLO he never dispatched any female agents.

39 Agreement. *Text of The Korean War Armistice Agreement, 27 July 1953*. Copy at: http://news.findlaw.com/scripts/printer_friendly.pl?page+/hdocs/docs/korea/kwarmagr072, accessed 22 July 2011.

40 Kessling interview, 24 March 2009.

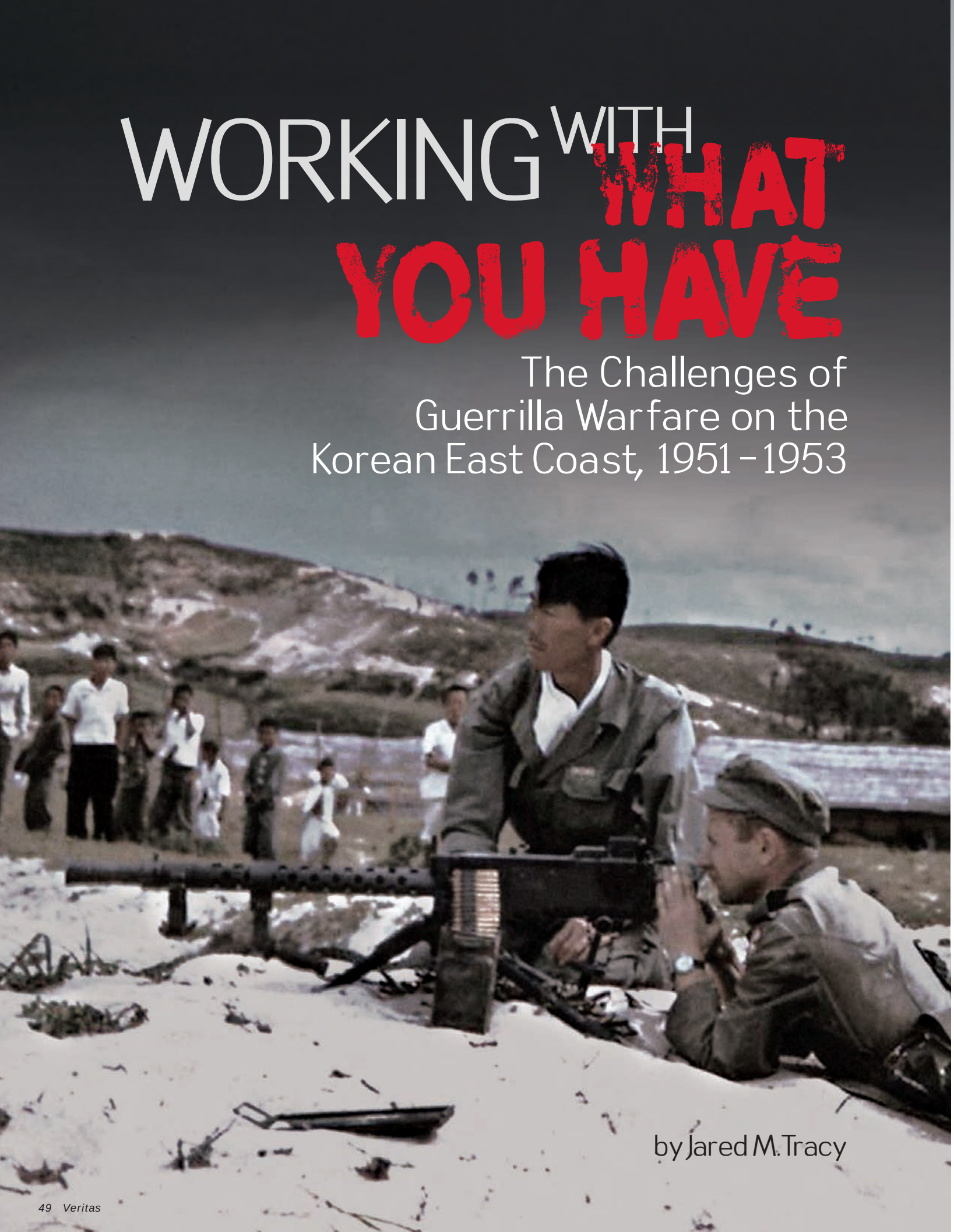
41 "Kagnew Battalion," http://www.army.mil/article/33578/Ethiopia - Kagnew veterans share memories of Korean War , accessed on 7 July 2011. The name Kagnew referred to the reconnaissance element in the military language of the Ethiopian Forces. It was also the name of Emperor Haile Selassie's father's (Leul Ras Makonnen) war horse.

42 Billy C. Mossman, *United States Army in the Korean War. Ebb and Flow November 1950-July 1951* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History United States Army, 2000), 442. S.L.A. Marshall, *Pork Chop Hill* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 1986), 178.

43 "Kagnew Battalion," http://www.army.mil/article/33578/Ethiopia - Kagnew veterans share memories of Korean War, accessed on 7 July 2011.

WORKING WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

The Challenges of Guerrilla Warfare on the Korean East Coast, 1951–1953



by Jared M. Tracy

"There [are] no two suns in the sky," First Lieutenant (1LT) William S. Harrison, Task Force (TF) KIRKLAND's first commander, reportedly told his Korean counterpart, Major (MAJ) Park Chang Am, before a group of friendly Korean guerrillas in mid-1951. 1LT Harrison wanted to establish without question that the unit was under American control, that he would not share command, and that only motivated Koreans could serve in the unit.[1]

However, as time would tell, low morale, desertions, shortages of American personnel, and supply problems prevented the unit from mounting an effective guerrilla warfare campaign on the Korean East Coast south of Wonsan. This article describes the personnel, organization, and missions of TF KIRKLAND from April 1951 to July 1953, and the factors that impacted its effectiveness.[2] Eighth U.S. Army's (EUSA) decision to establish organizations to direct operational guerrilla units such as TF KIRKLAND emerged from the conventional situation in Korea.

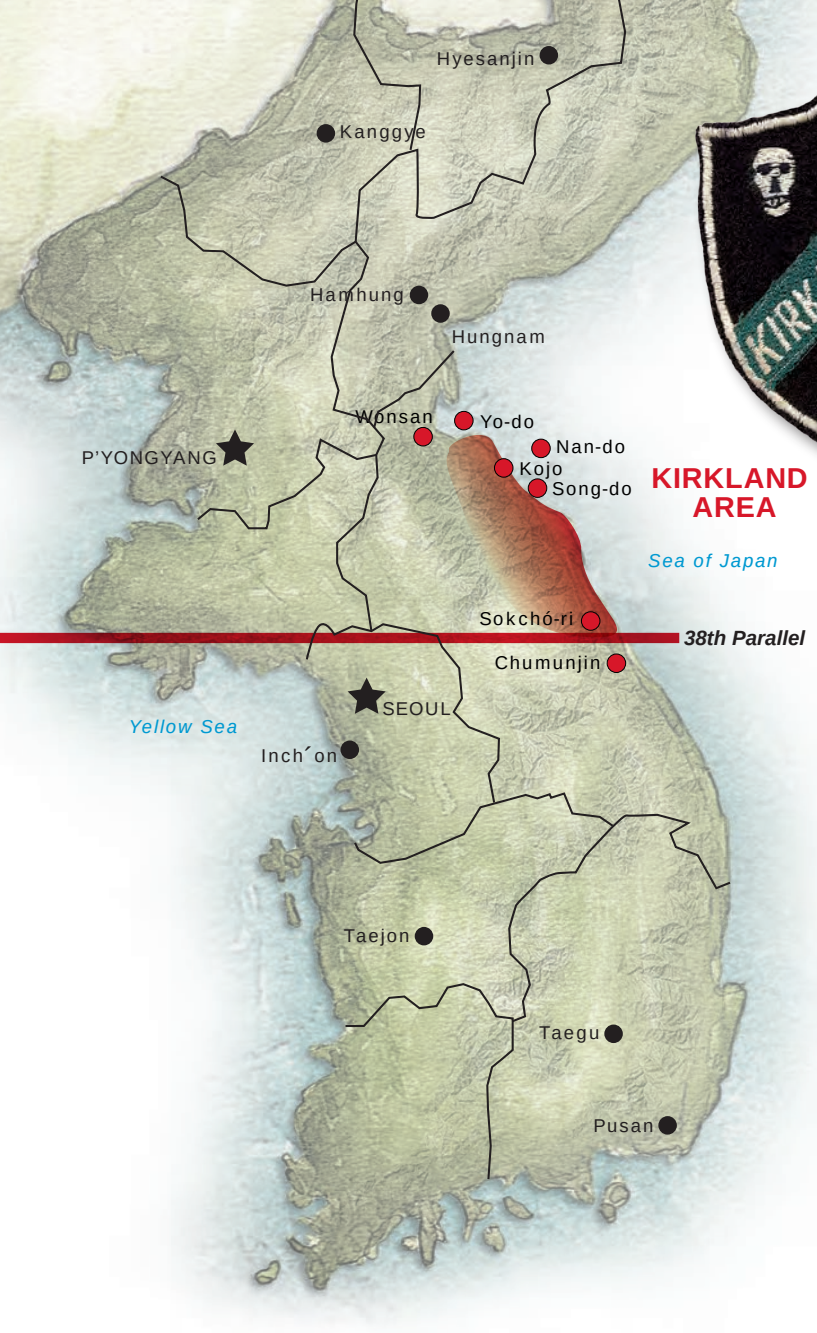
In June 1950, the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) invaded the Republic of Korea (ROK), and nearly achieved a complete takeover of the South. Led by the U.S. military, United Nations (UN) forces intervened and held the perimeter at Pusan. In September, X Corps opened a second front at Inch'on, allowing the combined UN forces to push the NKPA from the ROK and advance northward to the Sino-Korean border. But from October to November 1950, sizeable Chinese Communist Forces crossed the Yalu River and attacked. This counteroffensive compelled UN forces to withdraw south from P'yongyang and Seoul, and the X Corps, since reassigned to northeast Korea, to evacuate through the East Coast North Korean port at Hungnam. UN troops prevented a second Communist takeover of the ROK and rolled enemy forces back. By May 1951 the war had basically stalemated along the 38th Parallel.

In January 1951, EUSA intelligence reported that anti-Communist Koreans, many from North Korea's Hwanghae Province, were engaging the NKPA. A large number of them had fled to off-shore islands along the West Coast. EUSA established a guerrilla command to organize, train, and direct them. In February 1951, Koreans assigned to WILLIAM ABLE BASE (later called LEOPARD BASE) began conducting raids and reconnaissance missions on the mainland. A year later, WOLFPACK BASE split off and augmented the West Coast guerrilla warfare campaign.[3] The intent of the EUSA, and later Far East Command (FEC), was to incorporate the operations of the anti-Communist guerrillas into the UN offensive effort.

(L) Located on the seaward side of Nan-do, this guerrilla camp is nearly indistinguishable from the surrounding rocky surface that characterized the entire island. (R) This aerial view of East Coast mountains typified the topography of TF KIRKLAND's area of operations between Wonsan and Sokch'o-ri. KIRKLAND had too few personnel and was too ill-equipped to cover the entirety of this nearly 100-mile mountainous expanse, so it operated generally in and around the Kojo area.









Unofficial patch of TF KIRKLAND.

The EUSA wanted to set up a similar organization to run guerrilla operations on the East Coast. However, the situation there differed greatly from the West Coast. First, there were fewer islands to operate from and fewer anti-Communist guerrillas. In addition, the ROK Army, not the EUSA, was the main conventional force on the East Coast. This resulted in a marked disparity in the resourcing of the West versus the East Coast guerrilla units. Despite these important differences, in April 1951 EUSA activated TF KIRKLAND at Chumunjin to collect intelligence, locate downed U.S. pilots, identify targets for naval gunfire, and attack enemy supply routes.[4]

The unit organized with two elements, KIRKLAND Rear and KIRKLAND Forward. KIRKLAND Rear operated in Chumunjin, seven miles south of the 38th Parallel, on the coast in the Kangwŏn-do region in northeastern South Korea.



13th Airborne Division SSI

This element was a merely a logistics supply point. KIRKLAND Forward was headquartered at Nan-do (also called Nam-do or Al-som), an island slightly south of the 39th Parallel and about ten miles offshore. 1LT Joseph R. Ulatoski regarded the island as "less than awe-inspiring. It looked like a huge forbidding rock thrusting out of the China Sea. With sheer cliffs on almost every side, it looked more like a prison than a base for military operations . . . [It] was a treeless and grass-covered trapezoidal shaped piece of granite about 400-500 yards long, about 300 yards wide at the center, and about 100 plus yards high at its central point."[5] KIRKLAND interpreter Pak Chang Oun (known also as Bok) called it a rocky, desolate "No-Man's Island." The KIRKLAND area of responsibility on the mainland spanned the mountainous region along the coastline south of Wonsan. Bok recalled that from Nan-do, "[W]e could see that rugged long-stretched mountain range very clearly, even some native houses along the coast."[6]

Colonel (COL) John H. McGee, head of the EUSA's guerrilla command, needed a reliable commander for TF KIRKLAND and chose 1LT William S. Harrison.[7] Harrison's military career began on 15 September 1943 in the Corps of Engineers. He learned engineering at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, and airborne training at Fort Benning, Georgia. He served in the 129th Airborne Engineer Battalion, 13th Airborne Division, deployed to Europe briefly, and left active duty on 17 March 1946. Harrison completed an International Relations degree from Harvard and returned to active duty in November 1948.[8] He served in the U.S. Military Advisory Group to the ROK before joining the Miscellaneous Division, G-3, EUSA, on 3 February 1951 with assignment to LEOPARD BASE and then as the first commander of KIRKLAND.[9]

From 21 April to 5 December 1951, 1LT Kingston M. Winget served as KIRKLAND Executive Officer (XO), Headquarters Commandant, and Supply Officer. A former platoon leader in C Company, 1/23rd Infantry Regiment, Winget "supervised the flow of supplies . . . to the forward base locations of [KIRKLAND]" and "speeded up the arrival of much needed items and expedited transportation and handling."[10] At Chumunjin, Winget had a sergeant working alongside him. Sergeant First Class (SFC) Robert P. Sarama, a former EUSA Ranger, served as the First Sergeant of TF KIRKLAND.

Throughout its existence, KIRKLAND had few U.S. officers and soldiers in the unit to serve as leaders and trainers. The number of Americans increased to only nine by December 1951 (two officers, three noncommissioned officers, two enlisted radio operators, a cook on Nan-do, and a supply



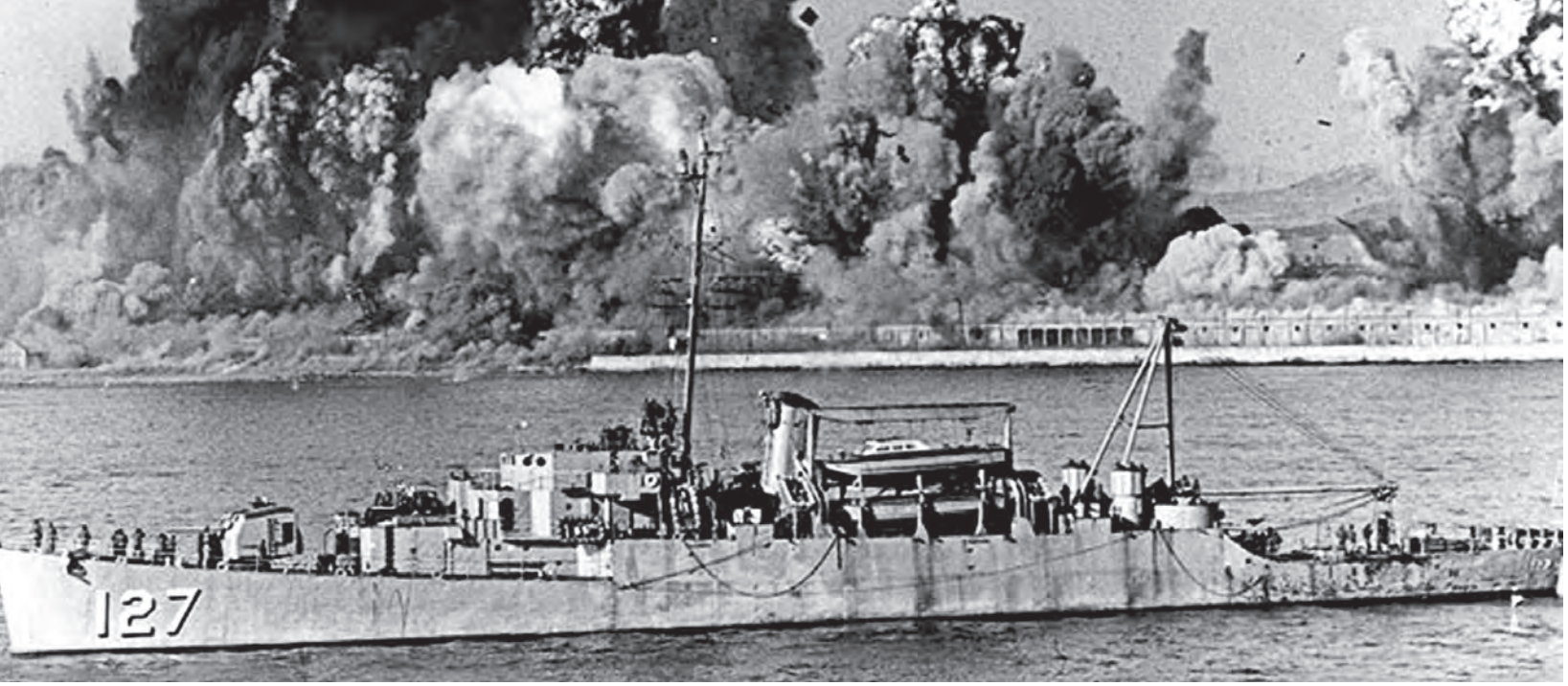
1LT Kingston M. Winget with guerrillas near Chumunjin, 1951. Commissioned as an Infantry Officer in May 1946, Winget served with the 24th and 8th Infantry Regiments in the interwar period. Arriving in Korea in January 1951, Winget was the 3rd Platoon Leader in C Company, 1/23rd Infantry Regiment when he participated in the Battle of Chipyong-ni. He had various duties in TF KIRKLAND from April to December 1951.

sergeant at KIRKLAND Rear, then at Sokch'o-ri north of Chumunjin on the mainland). In 1952, the unit averaged only four U.S. officers and six enlisted soldiers. The total number of Americans in KIRKLAND at any one time peaked at around thirty-five in 1953. Recruiting standards for the unit were not formalized. 1LT Ulatoski remembered that many of "the enlisted men [who served in KIRKLAND] were . . . Rangers or airborne," except for those who served in combat service support roles.[11]

Unlike on the West Coast, no partisans occupied the islands off the East Coast. Luckily, a solution presented itself early on. EUSA had inherited from the ROK Army a group of poorly trained Koreans, sometimes called the Miryang Guerrilla 'Battalion.'[12] According to Bok, most of them were North Koreans who fled Hungnam aboard UN boats the previous winter and had received minimal training from the ROK Army. The ROK Army distrusted the North Koreans and so did not invest much time, resources, and manpower on them. EUSA promptly transferred these strays to KIRKLAND under Harrison, who sent around twenty to KIRKLAND Rear and the rest to Nan-do. Harrison did not have to worry about arming them as they already had small arms and hand grenades, but he had difficulty supplying them with adequate food and potable water.[13] Despite these logistical problems, operational planning began.

At 0645 hours on 2 June 1951, the USS *Begor* (APD-127), commanded by U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) Archie C. Kuntze and under the operational control of Commander, TF 95, anchored at Muk-ho, Korea. At 0830 hours, COL McGee and 1LT Harrison met on board with LCDR Kuntze and LCDR J. F. Chace, the officer in charge of an Underwater Demolition Team (UDT). There, McGee proposed a plan to insert 205 guerrillas with seven tons of equipment on the southern beaches of Kojo Bay to gather intelligence and raid enemy garrisons in the area. The plan required naval support.[14]

The Sea of Japan as seen from the area of Chumunjin.



The USS *Begor* (APD-127) patrolled the Korean coast from December 1950 to August 1951 in support of UN troops ashore. The *Begor* also transported Underwater Demolition Teams, one of which set explosive charges around Hungnam following mass evacuations. Pictured above are the resulting explosions on 24 December 1950 with the *Begor* in the foreground. (R) MAJ Alfred R. Coccumelli, commander of TF KIRKLAND, and 1LT Joseph R. Ulatoski, XO of KIRKLAND Forward. Coccumelli had great difficulty resupplying the raiding/coast-watching team occupying Song-do, and he sent Ulatoski to determine the available resources and organize the guerrillas into a viable fighting force. The supply problems persisted and most of the guerrillas deserted Song-do within weeks of Ulatoski's arrival.



McGee, Harrison, Kuntze, and Chace identified four major problems: (1) several ship-to-shore round trips were needed to deliver personnel and supplies; (2) the *Begor* had to remain 6,000 yards from shore to stay out of mined waters; (3) the NKPA had heavy defenses in (and frequently patrolled) the area; and (4) KIRKLAND would lose the element of surprise after the landing of the first wave. Thus, the plan devolved to occupying the small island of Song-do (also called Sol-som), "using force if necessary, and all personnel and equipment [would be] landed there." Song-do was a tear-drop shaped, steep sided, tree-covered island approximately nine hundred meters long, three hundred meters wide, and nine hundred meters from the mainland. Its location allowed guerrillas to infiltrate the mainland in teams using smaller craft. In addition, it provided them with a good vantage point to see coastal targets and to allow them to direct naval gunfire.[15]

At 1500 hours, 2 June 1951, the *Begor* departed Muk-ho and anchored 4,500 meters from Song-do. Two LCPRs (Landing Craft, Personnel [Ramp]) headed for the island. The first carried LCDR Chace, 1LT Harrison, twenty-one UDT personnel, two enlisted radiomen from KIRKLAND, and twelve Korean guerrillas. The second carried COL McGee and thirty-three Koreans. To LCDR Kuntze, the Koreans "appeared very much undisciplined, with little respect for their officers. In addition, a number were intoxicated and saki [*sic*] was noted in several canteens in lieu of water."[16]

After several hours' observation, scout swimmers from the UDT concluded that while the island had no enemy defenders, it also had no suitable beach for landing the LCPRs. 1LT Harrison, the two radiomen, and the forty-five Koreans went ashore on rubber boats, and the LCPRs (including COL McGee and the UDT personnel) headed back to the *Begor*. Radio communication was established with the landing party at 0400 hours on 3 June. After three round trips using LCPRs and a LCVP (Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel), they completed the delivery of personnel and seven tons of equipment by 0430 hours on 4 June. An LCPR took 1LT Harrison and the remaining UDT personnel off Song-do the next day. With two *sampans*[17] at their disposal, the guerrillas on Song-do could begin infiltrating the mainland.[18]

Operations had barely begun when command of KIRKLAND transferred from 1LT Harrison to MAJ Alfred R. Coccumelli. Harrison, who left KIRKLAND on 30 June, earned praise for commanding "disorganized guerrilla bands in east Korea, swiftly [unifying] them into a cohesive force . . . to perform attrition and intelligence missions."[19] With 1LT Winget still at KIRKLAND Rear, Coccumelli

welcomed a new officer as XO of KIRKLAND Forward, 1LT Joseph R. Ulatoski.

Still recovering from combat wounds sustained while serving as XO in the 5th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne), Ulatoski joined KIRKLAND in July. In addition to having served with the 5th Rangers, Ulatoski before the war had assisted the G-2, XXIV Corps in infiltrating agents into North Korea. These assignments, coupled with the fact that he "got along real well with the Koreans," made him a natural fit as a leader in KIRKLAND.[20] Ulatoski later stated that "had I not had two years of previous experience working with the Koreans (1946-1948), I would have been almost totally ineffective and virtually useless for several months."[21] Corporal (CPL) Cyril A. Tritz, a post-WWII member of the Army of Occupation (25th ID) in Japan and recent veteran of the 4th Ranger Infantry Company, also joined the unit.[22]

In July, MAJ Coccumelli sent 1LT Ulatoski and, a short time later, CPL Tritz to Song-do to work with the thirty- to forty-man guerrilla team there. Under MAJ Han, that team had done some small inland raids and had reported information about the enemy to Nan-do for the past month as it endured terrible living conditions on the island. On Song-do, guerrillas had little food or potable water and swarms of mosquitoes and rodents added to their problems. Resupply of the team was rare as the trip from Nan-do to Song-do took several hours by *sampan*, and then only if winds and currents were favorable. As Ulatoski recounted, sea conditions "frequently dictated the pace of operations."[23]

1LT Ulatoski and CPL Tritz met with the group and immediately grasped its supply problems, but could do nothing about it. "Han and his people were obviously disaffected . . . and in dire need of some sort of supplies and support."[24] MAJ Han and Ulatoski quickly built a good rapport and the pace of operations increased markedly. However, after a while, the relationship deteriorated because the anticipated increased support failed to materialize. Unfortunately, Ulatoski was limited by what the base at Nan-do could procure and send. Morale among the guerrillas steadily worsened.



The site of 1LT Ulatoski's and CPL Tritz's rapid evacuation from Song-do following an aggressive NKPA attack in early August 1951.

In addition, the NKPA sent small probing elements by *sampan* to Song-do. In response, Han and his team emplaced mines, manned lookout points, and fortified positions around the island. According to 1LT Ulatoski, "We got hit a couple of times [while on Song-do], just probes, no major attacks . . . [During] the raids we Americans took up a position away from the action to avoid getting shot up by either side."[25] Ulatoski and Bok recalled one probe beginning at 0200 hours sometime in early August. The exchange of fire between the Communists and guerrillas over a period of hours left three NKPA soldiers dead on the beach. The KIRKLAND team sustained no casualties.[26]

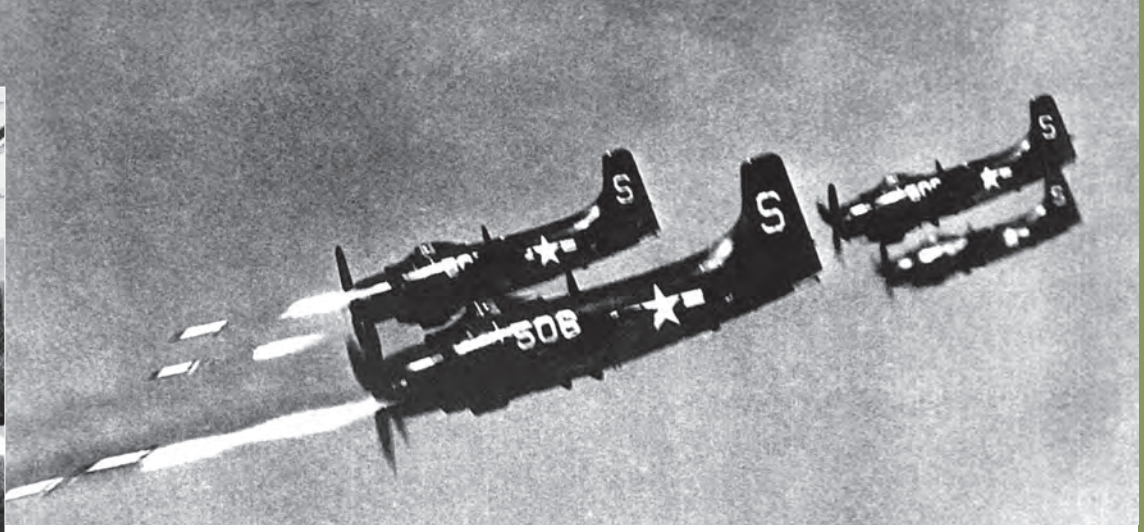
After a couple of weeks, 1LT Ulatoski noticed that MAJ Han "seemed to become more distant and demanding about supplies, and wanted money to start paying the members of his group. We were doing all that we could and were unable to provide him [with] any more supplies . . . [W]e certainly could not provide money for him to pay his personnel."[27] Following the arrival of a large unidentified motorized *sampan*, MAJ Han informed Ulatoski at gun point that "he's taking his people and leaving." They departed on that *sampan* and the smaller *sampans* as well, leaving 1LT Ulatoski, CPL Tritz, Bok, and about seven North Korean refugees stranded on the island. Ulatoski remembered calling MAJ Coccumelli on Nan-do and reminding him, "[We're] hanging out here." Coccumelli replied, "Well, hang out for a couple of days and I'll see if I can get some help over to you." The lieutenant told him that he and the others may have to evacuate because surviving on the island, much less defending it, seemed impossible without reinforcements and supplies.[28]

> "Get us a boat over here, get us some way that we can get the hell off of here if we are attacked."
> *1 LT Joseph Ulatoski*

A more serious assault on Song-do seemed imminent. "We put people at various points along the coast so that [we] would be alerted if anything [threatening] was noted." Concerned about their vulnerability, Ulatoski radioed Nan-do and demanded, "Get us a boat over here, get us some way that we can get the hell off of here if we are attacked." MAJ Coccumelli arranged for the delivery of a 40-foot motor launch that the Navy had provided to KIRKLAND. When it arrived, it was moored in a makeshift harbor on the seaward side of Song-do.[29]

Shortly after midnight one morning in early August 1951, the sounds of a loud explosion, small arms fire, and screaming erupted on the north side of the island. "Almost immediately," Ulatoski recalled, "the same thing happened on the south side of the island."[30] Enemy soldiers had "apparently got[ten] on the island without anyone observing them . . . How they got there I have no idea. Who didn't see them? Who didn't fire? Who didn't yell?" It was clear to the KIRKLAND personnel that the "volume of fire coming in was more than just a little routine probe."[31] The NKPA threatened to overrun the defenders. Covering their movement with a heavy volume of small arms fire, 1LT Ulatoski, CPL Tritz, and Bok made it to the motor launch.





Douglas AD-4 Skyraiders from the USS *Valley Forge* (CV-45) fire 5-inch rockets on North Korean positions in October 1950. LTJG Ettinger was on such a mission on 13 December 1951 when his aircraft was hit by ground fire and he was forced to bail out. (L) Aviation Cadet Harry E. Ettinger stands beside his Boeing Stearman N2S at the Naval Air Station in Corpus Christi, Texas, April 1946.

They and the remaining refugees evacuated the island and, with CPL Tritz having lit a timed fuse, blew a pre-wired weapons and ammunition cache behind them. Ensuing naval barrages destroyed the remaining Communists on the island. This enabled naval intelligence and friendly Korean soldiers to reoccupy Song-do some time later.[32]

In the fall of 1951, MAJ Coccumelli suffered a heart attack, was evacuated, and never returned to KIRKLAND.[33] Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Samuel W. Koster from the U.S. Army guerrilla command visited Nan-do to inspect the unit and to inform Ulatoski of his plan to replace Coccumelli with another major. The 1LT replied, "Why not leave me in command? Hell, I've got enough points to go home, but if you'll leave me in command, I'll stay." LTC Koster acceded, and he also sent a second lieutenant (2LT) whom Ulatoski soon relieved because some guerrillas refused to go on any more missions with him. On 22 December 1951, the commander welcomed a new lieutenant as his XO, 1LT Albert W. C. Naylor-Foote.[34]

Born in Manchester, England, Naylor-Foote had seen service in China, Burma, India, and French Indo-China during World War II. He served in the British and Indian Armies from April 1941 through April 1945. He received a commission as a 2LT in the U.S. Army in April 1945, after which he served in such units as the Military Intelligence Service X (MIS-X), the Air Ground Aid Service [AGAS], and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). He completed parachute training at the OSS Parachute School in Kunming, China, in July 1945. Promoted to 1LT in September, he retained a reserve commission in the Military Intelligence (MI) Branch after the war. In August 1950, he completed the MI Course at the Army General School, Fort Riley, Kansas. In addition to his colorful military record, he was, according to official Army records, fluent in several foreign languages.[35]

Throughout late 1951, the unit forwarded information that it had uncovered through island observation and mainland operations to Combined Command, Reconnaissance Activities, Korea (CCRAK), the FEC coordinating agency for guerrilla warfare. One CCRAK report dated 28 December 1951 listed some of TF KIRKLAND's findings: a 120mm gun position, twenty North Korean troops stockpiling ammunition, a battalion-sized element traveling southward along a trail, fifty enemy soldiers digging entrenchments, and an anti-aircraft artillery piece.[36] Occasionally, intelligence collection included very vague and non-specific information about American prisoners of war (POWs) on the mainland.

In early 1952, TF KIRKLAND attempted to rescue downed U.S. Navy pilot Lieutenant junior grade (LTJG) Harry E. Ettinger. During a close air support mission on 13 December 1951, Ettinger's AD-4 Skyraider was struck by 37mm anti-aircraft fire and he was forced to abandon the aircraft. On the ground, Ettinger was captured by villagers, turned over to NKPA soldiers, and transported as a POW to the main North Korean interrogation center at P'yongyang. In late January 1952, Ettinger's captors escorted him to the vicinity of Wonsan, possibly as bait for rescue aircraft. KIRKLAND Forward would soon attempt to rescue Ettinger using one of its guerrilla teams already operating on the mainland.[37]

For several months, KIRKLAND had teams relaying information to Nan-do from the mountains on the mainland. (MAJ Coccumelli's unexpected departure, the frequent turnover of personnel, and radio failures made it difficult for Ulatoski and others to track the teams' names, dispositions, and locations.) 1LT Naylor-Foote recalled that the teams had not been resupplied "for the entire time that they had been operating on the mainland . . . [morale] in the groups was extremely low, the danger of defection was extremely high . . . the major reason [for failing] to remain operational for both groups was the lack of supply and the feeling that they . . . had not obtained adequate support from the island base."[38] 1LT Naylor-Foote wanted to resupply the mainland teams and rescue LTJG Ettinger at the same time.

One KIRKLAND guerrilla team (most likely the one codenamed DARBY) informed Nan-do that it had Ettinger in its custody, indicating that it had probably already been compromised and was working with his captors.[39] However, KIRKLAND Forward personnel could not have

Ettinger Rescue Attempt



1.


2.


3.


4.


5.



6.

1. Lift off of a Sikorsky HO3S-1, April 1953. Designed for utility, this helicopter weighed 3,788 pounds and it had a maximum lift capacity of 4,985 pounds. It could accommodate one crew member, three passengers, and 145 pounds of baggage, and had a 300-pound hoist capacity. With a range of 275 miles and a ceiling of 14,800 feet, its maximum speed was about 100 miles per hour.
2. Chief Petty Officer Duane W. Thorin. Assigned to the USS *Rochester* (CA-124) in late 1951, Thorin flew a Sikorsky HO3S-1 helicopter in the attempt to rescue LTJG Harry E. Ettinger in February 1952.
3. Accompanied by TF KIRKLAND XO 1LT Albert W.C. Naylor-Foote, U.S. Navy pilot CPO Duane Thorin descends in a Sikorsky HO3S-1 to pick up LTJG Harry E. Ettinger, 7 February 1952. *(Mariano Santillan)*
4. CPO Duane Thorin returns to freedom, August 1953.
5. Major General (MG) Randolph M. Pate, commander of the 1st Marine Division and later the Commandant of the Marine Corps (1956-59), welcomes LTJG Harry E. Ettinger to freedom, September 1953. Ettinger had been held captive since December 1951.
6. Commissioned in December 1946, the USS *Rochester* (CA-124) had three tours in Korea between 1951 and 1953. The cruiser monitored the Korean coast, provided naval gunfire support for ground units, and served as a helicopter base. The Sikorsky used to reach LTJG Ettinger originated from the *Rochester.*

known this. Ulatoski confirmed Ettinger's identity and status by radio and developed initial plans to extract him. After one unsuccessful rescue attempt of his own, 1LT Ulatoski coordinated with the Navy to use a Sikorsky HO3S-1 helicopter from the USS *Rochester* (CA-124), piloted by Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Duane Thorin, to pick up Ettinger at a prearranged location. Naylor-Foote implored Ulatoski to let him lead the mission personally, which the commander agreed to due to his confidence in the XO's military credentials.[40]

On 7 February 1952, the day of the planned extraction, Ettinger stood in a clearing in a valley where he "tramped a triangle in the snow" in front of an old wooden building and lit a signal fire. Soon he saw "ADs and Corsairs [from the USS *Valley Forge* (CV-45)] and a helicopter coming in from the east." CPO Thorin and 1LT Naylor-Foote easily spotted him from the air. Nothing seemed unusual, other than the large fire which the XO feared would attract attention. Thorin descended to make the pickup. In frail physical condition, Ettinger ran to the helicopter. Naylor-Foote pulled him on board by his collar. For reasons unknown, the helicopter flew only a short distance before dropping and crashing on its side.[41]

None of the passengers sustained injury in the crash. Thorin informed naval aircraft overhead of the situation. Naylor-Foote called for help from DARBY, believing that it was nearby. Yet, before receiving any friendly assistance, a North Korean patrol captured the Americans. CPO Thorin remained a prisoner until August 1953, and LTJG Ettinger and 1LT Naylor-Foote remained captive until early September 1953.[42]

Soon after this event, both CCRAK and KIRKLAND Forward lost contact with DARBY, BIG BOY, and the other teams on the mainland. Both organizations suspected that the teams had been compromised. Bok later recalled that "[MAJ Coccumelli's] agents had turned out to [be] Communist agents."[43] Upon learning of CCRAK's suspicion that KIRKLAND teams were compromised, Ulatoski said, "I consciously made a decision [to] let them 'die on the vine.' It wasn't just BIG BOY; [all of] our operations had been compromised." The KIRKLAND commander did not want to risk anyone's life trying to locate them and bring them back.[44] TF KIRKLAND's ability to conduct inland raids diminished significantly following these events.[45] Because of desertions, casualties, the failed rescue attempt of LTJG Ettinger, and the compromised teams on the mainland, "we were pretty much [out] of business" as far as guerrilla assets under the direct control of KIRLKAND, according to 1LT Ulatoski.[46]

As KIRKLAND focused on refitting and training, CCRAK had directed the unit to train and equip Korean paratroopers.[47] Newly promoted Captain (CPT) Ulatoski and 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team veteran SGT Curtis D. Terry supervised that training. According to Ulatoski, "We trained them all on the island, everything but their jump . . . [We] took them up to the top of the island where we had leveled off this helicopter landing strip and let them practice their drags and getting out the parachutes. [Terry] rigged up another suspended harness . . . so that they could practice slipping their parachutes. We took them down to Sokch'o-ri . . . and we all jumped out of [an airplane] and reported back that we have twenty paratroopers." This training was one of Ulatoski's final tasks in KIRKLAND.[48]

In mid-1952, two officers reported to the unit: Captain (CPT) Shelby D. Minton, a Signal Corps officer and CPT Ulatoski's successor in command, and 1LT Malcolm C. Ward, 1LT Naylor-Foote's replacement as XO. During WWII, Ward served in the OSS and the 1/507th Parachute Infantry Regiment. He left active duty in December 1945 and worked in marketing and advertising. Returning to active duty in December 1950, Ward served with the 8th Infantry Division and in the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment before arriving at KIRKLAND in February 1952.[49] After a brief operational lull, the arrival of new personnel, and the onset of more favorable weather, KIRKLAND resumed its missions.

NKPA attacks on Song-do, the island that KIRKLAND personnel had earlier evacuated and had since been





(L) TF KIRKLAND commander CPT Joseph Ulatoski addresses a formation of recent airborne graduates on Nan-do, 1952. Ulatoski and SGT Curtis D. Terry conducted the majority of training on the island before the guerrillas made qualification jumps at Sockch'o-ri. (R) CPT Joseph Ulatoski pins wings on a recent guerrilla airborne graduate, 1952.

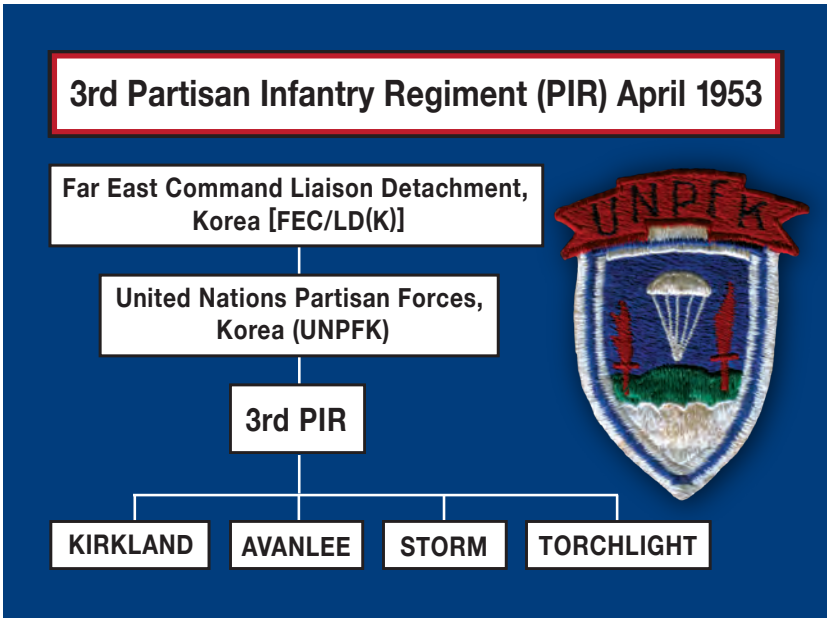
re-occupied by friendly forces, continued. On 2 September 1952, the enemy fired sixty-two artillery rounds at the island, killing one Korean and wounding another. Friendly warships fired retaliatory rounds at a supply road under observation by the guerrillas on Song-do. Subsequent reports claimed that the naval barrage had destroyed one bunker and one mortar position, killed fifteen NKPA soldiers, and wounded twenty-five. KIRKLAND had other concerns in September. According to a unit status report, Typhoon Karen impeded landings on the mainland and destroyed many unit supplies including two *sampans*, five squad tents, twenty-five bags of wheat, thirty bags of rice, and one thousand packs of Korean cigarettes.[50]

On 27 September 1952, a twelve-man raiding team from KIRKLAND went inland to capture enemy personnel, but automatic weapons fire forced it to withdraw. The next day, a ten-man patrol led by 2LT James S. McGhee and SGT T. J. Phillips attacked an enemy force near an inland supply route. McGhee called naval gunfire on the enemy position to no effect. NKPA small arms fire intensified and forced the team to withdraw, but it sustained no casualties.[51]

Shortly after midnight on 6 October, 2LT McGhee, Private First Class (PFC) Joseph T. Morgan, and seven guerrillas conducted a reconnaissance patrol and seized some intelligence documents. The next day, McGhee, PFC Robert F. Norris, and seven guerrillas picked up friendly agents in the same vicinity. The NKPA fired upon the escaping guerrillas, but hit no one. In response, guerrillas on Song-do directed naval gunfire at the enemy positions. KIRKLAND then had a brief respite from operations for additional training, but on 12 October, McGhee and one guerrilla landed ashore to assess the damage of naval bombardments on and around the Kojo peninsula. The two-man team made it only 2,000 meters inland before being seen by the enemy. In the ensuing firefight, the two men killed at least four enemy soldiers, but McGhee's partner was killed.[52]

LTC Anthony J. Scannon assumed command of the unit in early October. Commissioned in July 1942, Scannon had served in the 10th Armored Division during WWII, the 758th and 64th Heavy Tank Battalions in the late 1940s, and in various military intelligence assignments prior to joining the guerrilla command. He remained in command until 16 June 1953.[53] In late 1952, TF KIRKLAND briefly changed designation to TF SCANNON before becoming the 3rd Partisan Infantry Regiment (PIR) of the UN Partisan Forces, Korea (UNPFK) on 21 November 1952. Headquartered in Sokch'o-ri, the 3rd PIR's East Coast guerrilla units consisted of four companies named STORM, KIRKLAND, TORCHLIGHT, and AVANLEE.[54]

The enlarged unit organization and increase in guerrilla authorizations compelled assigned U.S. Army personnel to widen the recruiting net and, as before, allow any willing Korean into the ranks of the 3rd PIR. According to Ulatoski, "There was not any sort of vetting system for any Korean associated with KIRKLAND. What you saw was what you had, and what you had was what you worked with."[55] Many guerrillas had less than patriotic motivations to serve. Some just wanted a continual flow of pay, rations, or supplies. Others were mercenaries or bandits with no dedication to any country or cause. Still others wanted to avoid conscription into the regular ROK Army. In November 1952, LTC Scannon noted that "it appears that we are not dealing with a group of fervent patriots or even brigands, but a group, particularly the newer recruits, who have accepted duty with the irregular forces as a lesser evil to being drafted into the ROK Army."[56] The unit had 275 Korean personnel in October 1952, 3,416 in February 1953, and over 4,500 in April.[57]



Organization of the 3rd Partisan Infantry Regiment, April 1953.

The increase in guerrilla personnel was intended to strengthen the unit and make it more operationally effective, but it only aggravated the existing problems of supply shortages, low morale, and desertions. Indeed, desertions remained endemic throughout the unit's existence. Some guerrillas escaped from the islands on *sampans* or by swimming. Others seized the opportunity to desert during a mainland operation. Guerrillas working in Chumunjin or Sokch'o-ri could easily abandon the unit. One source argues that the East Coast guerrilla unit "never seemed to overcome its problems of low morale and desertion long enough to mount an effective special operations campaign."[58]

Moreover, by the spring of 1953, operations had become extremely impractical because the NKPA had heavily reinforced the coast. This compounded the fact that Armistice talks had already made the U.S. less inclined to use Korean guerrillas for missions behind the lines. In addition, Ulatoski remembered, "It became very apparent, almost immediately after peace talks started, that the fervor of our North Koreans to return to help liberate their homeland markedly diminished."[59] Due to these factors, the unit operated less frequently and productively than some of the West Coast guerrilla units.[60]

On 13 April 1953, the order came to stop recruiting for guerrilla units, and in June all such units had to evacuate

islands above the 38th Parallel. UN/U.S.-sponsored guerrilla operations above the 38th Parallel ended with the formal ceasefire.[61] Incorporating UN guerrillas into the ROK Army structure began. By March 1954, the ROK Army had inducted most of the Koreans who had previously served in the PIRs, formally ending the UN guerrilla warfare effort.[62]

Between 1951 and 1953, the unit known as TF KIRKLAND, TF SCANNON, and the 3rd PIR did not have any appreciable effect on the East Coast for many reasons. First, the small number of U.S. Army personnel assigned to the unit negatively impacted the guerrillas' training, resourcing, transportation, and support. According to 1LT Ulatoski, of the few American personnel assigned to the unit, though "excellent in quality and [knowledge of] their weapons, equipment, and tactics, none had ever operated with indigenous personnel, few had worked with an interpreter, and none had cultural training. This necessitated considerable 'on the job training' which, in turn, reduced effectiveness."[63]

Second, the ROK Army, the main conventional force along the East Coast, did not pick up the slack in the absence of sufficient resourcing from EUSA. KIRKLAND had to rely heavily on the other services (both U.S. and combined) and the limited availability of naval and air assets. Supply problems, low morale, and desertions continually hindered operational effectiveness and unit cohesion. As Ulatoski recalled, "The paucity of rudimentary supplies was one of several, if not the major, detriments to development of more effective guerrilla operations. This was highlighted by a period where the U.S. Army and the ROK Army cut off supplies to guerrilla elements This adversely affected all our Koreans and required innovative actions until resupply commenced."[64]

The unit did have a few successes, especially when it provided the Navy with enemy targets to shoot or drop bombs on. 1LT Naylor-Foote recalled, "By tying in with the Navy and furnishing them with [information], we felt that we would further the overall objectives which we understood to exist."[65] Ulatoski concurred: "We were able to supply the Navy with [gunfire] targets, probably our best contribution."[66] However, its internal problems, along with political and military considerations outside of its control, prevented the unit from having a significant impact on the war effort along the East Coast.

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Signed by LTC Anthony J. Scannon, 3rd Partisan Infantry Regiment commander, and 1LT David K. Brooks, Airborne Training Officer, this certificate dated 22 April 1953 awarded the United Nations Partisan Airborne Infantry Badge to a recent graduate. Note the use of TF SCANNON (inset) instead of 3rd PIR, despite the unit's redesignation in November 1952.

Unofficial patch of TF SCANNON.

Endnotes

1 Nam Pyo Lee, email to James Harrison, Sr., 27 December 1999, Harrison Family Personal Collection (HFPC).

2 According to one TF KIRKLAND commander, then-1LT Joseph Ulatoski, the unit never had "an office of records," thus leaving few documents from which to reconstruct its operational history. Brigadier General (retired) Joseph Ulatoski, 8086th and 8240th Army Units, interview with Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 7 March 2011, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Ulatoski interview, 7 March 2011.

3 Military History Detachment (MHD)-3, 8086th Army Unit (AU), "UN Partisan Forces in the Korean Conflict, 1951-1952—A Study of their Characteristics and Operations," Center of Military History, Fort McNair, Washington, DC (1954), 1-3, hereafter "UN Partisan Forces in the Korean Conflict;" Billy Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1990), 229-230; Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence V. Schuetta, *Guerrilla Warfare and Airpower in Korea, 1950-53* (Maxwell Air Force Base: Air University, 1964), 5, 63-64, 69-72, hereafter *Guerrilla Warfare and Airpower in Korea*; Daniel Politella, *Operation Grasshopper: The Story of Army Aviation in Korea from Aggression to Armistice* (Tyler, TX: Robert R. Longo Company, 1958), 2-5, cited in *Guerrilla Warfare and Airpower in Korea*, 63; Eighth U.S. Army, Korea, "Organization and Plan for Partisan Operations in Korea," January 1951, cited in *Guerrilla Warfare and Airpower in Korea*, 71.

4 Frederick W. Cleaver, *et. al.*, "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea, 1951-1954," Operations Research Office, Johns Hopkins University (1956), 32, 155, hereafter "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea."

5 Annex to letter from BG (Ret.) Joseph Ulatoski to USASOC History Office, 18 April 2012, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Ulatoski letter, annex #1.

6 "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea," 35. See also Richard L. Kiper, "Unconventional Warfare in Korea: Forgotten Aspect of the 'Forgotten War,'" *Special Warfare* 16 (August 2003), 31, hereafter "Unconventional Warfare in Korea"; ADTIC Publication G-102, *Terrain and Climates of Korea and Adjacent Lands* (Maxwell Air Force Base: Research Studies Institute, 1952), 1-12, cited in *Guerrilla Warfare and Airpower in Korea*, 1; Letter by Pak 'Bok' Chang Oun, KIRKLAND interpreter, to unknown recipient, 12 July 1985, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, 4-6, hereafter Bok letter with page number.

7 COL John H. McGee to 1LT William S. Harrison, 14 May 1951, and McGee to Harrison, 28 May 1951, both in Folder "KIRKLAND," 8240th AU Files, cited in "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea," 32; "Unconventional Warfare in Korea," 31.

8 WD AGO 53-98, Military Record and Report of Separation Certificate of Service for William S. Harrison, no date (ca. February 1946), HFPC; DD 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty for William S. Harrison, no date, HFPC. Harrison earlier earned the Silver Star for having supported a "guerrilla type battalion" with an amphibious landing near Changsa-dong "behind enemy lines" on 14 September 1950. Initially "an advisor," he assumed command of the unit and led its counterattacks until additional landing craft arrived. Silver Star Citation for William S. Harrison, 12 September 1978 (for actions on 14 September 1950), HFPC.

9 Legion of Merit Citation (LOM) for William S. Harrison, no date, HFPC, hereafter Harrison LOM Citation.

10 1LT Harrison to 1LT Winget, no date, Folder "Miscellaneous Correspondence," 8240th AU Files, cited in "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea," 32; DA 638, Recommendation for Award—Meritorious Achievement or Service for 1LT Kingston M. Winget, 3 December 1951, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Resume of Military Service of Captain Kingston M. Winget, 4 April 1955, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.

11 "Staff Study of Korean Guerrilla Warfare Program," 20 April 1951, Folder "KIRKLAND," 8240th AU Files, cited in "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea," 41; "UN Partisan Forces in the Korean Conflict," 3-4; 1LT Albert W.C. Naylor-Foote, "Basic Interrogation Narrative," no date (ca. September 1953), Box "Interrogation Reports of Personnel Returned to Military Control in 'Operation Little Switch,'" Series "Records of the Casualty Division, AG, General Secretary," Record Group (RG) 338, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD, 4, hereafter Naylor-Foote narrative with page number; Ulatoski interview, 7 March 2011.

12 According to Ulatoski, when MAJ Coccumelli assumed command of KIRKLAND at Nan-do, he discovered "a group of 40-50 heterogeneous North Koreans who had been very loosely organized into what was called a partisan unit, but . . . did not have any sort of real leadership and only [had] a hodgepodge of equipment." Coccumelli and Ulatoski had both been "under the impression that there was a battalion, a considerable force of organized partisans on Nan-do." Ulatoski letter, annex #1.

13 Bok letter, 1-4, 7.

14 LCDR Archie C. Kuntze, Commander, USS *Begor* (APD-127), "Action Report—Landing of Eighth Army Guerrilla Personnel during Period 2 June-5 June 1951," 13 June 1951, 1, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Kuntze, "Action Report."

15 Kuntze, "Action Report," 2.

16 Kuntze, "Action Report," 2.

17 Ulatoski described *sampans* as "basically rowboats with a maximum calm water capacity of about five people. They were powered by a single scull in the rear and could go about a mile an hour. It was virtually impossible to move one quietly." Letter from BG (Ret.) Joseph Ulatoski to USASOC History Office, 18 April 2012, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Ulatoski letter.

18 Kuntze, "Action Report," 3, 6. For Rear Admiral George C. Dyer's (Commander, Task Force 95) comments about LCDR Kuntze's "Action Report," see Dyer," First Endorsement on CO, USS *Begor* (APD-127) sec let A16-13 ser 005 of 13 June 1951 [Action Report—Landing of Eighth Army Guerrilla Personnel during Period 2-5 June 1951]," 3 July 1951, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. Bok's recounting of the first raid/firefight on the mainland contained no dates or locations and was vague about the number of personnel involved, thus precluding an accurate, definitive description of the event. See Bok letter, 9-11.

19 Harrison LOM Citation.

20 Ulatoski interview, 7 March 2011. Ulatoski had also served as assistant S-3 in Company B, 8th Infantry Regiment, under then-regimental commander LTC John H. McGee, before the war.

21 Ulatoski letter.

22 Enlisted Record and Report of Separation for Cyril A. Tritz, no date (ca. May 1947), National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), St. Louis, MO.

23 Ulatoski letter; LTC Koster to 1LT Harrison, 5 July 1951, Folder "8086 Memos," 8240th AU Files, cited in "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea," 34; Naylor-Foote narrative, 9; Kenneth Finlayson, "Wolfpacks and Donkeys: Special Forces Soldiers in the Korean War," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (2007), 34; Brigadier General (retired) Joseph Ulatoski, 8086th and 8240th Army Units, interview with Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 14 October 2003, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Ulatoski interview, 14 October 2003. For an account of naval and joint operations in Korea, see James A. Field, Jr., *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1962), also available online at http://www.history.navy.mil/books/field/index.htm (accessed 21 November 2011).

24 Ulatoski letter, annex #1.

25 Ulatoski interview, 14 October 2003.

26 Bok letter, 20-25; Ulatoski letter, annex #1.

27 Ulatoski letter, annex #1.

28 Ulatoski interview, 7 March 2011; Bok letter, 26.

29 Ulatoski interview, 7 March 2011.

30 Ulatoski letter, annex #1.

31 Ulatoski interview, 7 March 2011.

32 For this action, CPL Tritz earned the Silver Star and 1LT Ulatoski earned the Bronze Star with 'V' device. Ulatoski interview, 7 March 2011; "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea," 155; Bok letter, 31.

33 Bok recalled that Coccumelli's heart attack occurred as he and others were trying to extract a KIRKLAND team from the mainland. Bok letter, 33.

34 Ulatoski interview, 7 March 2011.

35 Separation Qualification Record for Albert W.C. Naylor-Foote, 27 September 1946, NPRC; Officer's and Warrant Officer's Qualification Card Copy for Albert W.C. Naylor-Foote, 10 January 1946, NPRC; Officer's, Warrant Officer's, and Flight Officer's Qualification Record for Albert W.C. Naylor-Foote, no date, NPRC; Chronological Record of Military Service for Albert W.C. Naylor-Foote, no date, NPRC. His training in the British and Indian militaries included the Air Landing School in July 1942, the Battalion Infantry Officer Course in April-May 1943, a Special Demolitions Course in May-June 1943, and the Intelligence Staff Course in November-December 1944. His foreign awards included the Military Cross, Burma Star, Atlantic Star, the British Defense Ribbon, and the Chinese Order of the Flying Cloud. He supposedly had fluency in Spanish, French, Chinese, Hindi, Portuguese, Urdu, and Khamkura, as well as the ability to pick up new languages quickly.

36 Combined Command for Reconnaissance Activity Korea (CCRAK), Military Intelligence Section, FEC, "Enemy Activity East Coast," 28 December 1951, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

37 Captain Harry E. Ettinger, U.S. Navy, interview by Jared M. Tracy, 17 November 2011, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; "VC-35/VA (AW)-35 Prisoners of War," http://www.vc-35andvaaw-35.org/pow/htm (accessed 14 December 2011); Defense Prisoner of War and Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), Korean War Aircraft Loss Database (KORWALD) Loss Incident Summary for Harry E. Ettinger, Jr., http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/korea/reports/air/korwald_info_2380.htm (accessed 1 February 2012).

38 Naylor-Foote narrative, 5-6.

39 Ettinger interview, 17 November 2011; Naylor-Foote narrative, 11. In contrast to statements by Ettinger and Naylor-Foote, Ulatoski recalled that BIG BOY, *not DARBY*, had called Nan-do to inform KIRKLAND that it had the prisoner in its custody. This seemingly minor discrepancy demonstrated the confusion about the names, locations, and dispositions of teams operating on the mainland.

40 Ettinger interview, 17 November 2011; Naylor-Foote narrative, 11.

41 Ettinger interview, 17 November 2011; Naylor-Foote narrative, 35-38; Annex #2 to letter from BG (Ret.) Joseph Ulatoski to USASOC History Office, 18 April 2012, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. The nature/amount of contents on the helicopter remains unknown. Ulatoski recalled a laundry bag filled with supplies and perhaps an SCR 300 radio. Ettinger, Thorin, and Naylor-Foote each later alluded to the helicopter having carried such items as ammunition crates, walkie-talkies, a pack radio, and/or other supplies. The contents on board the helicopter formed the basis for a divergence of opinion among the participants over whether the helicopter crashed due to excess weight, or whether it resulted from another factor (e.g., enemy fire, mechanical malfunction, pilot error).

42 The three were released as part of Operation BIG SWITCH, the repatriation arrangement made between Communist and UN forces as part of the 1953 Armistice agreement. Ettinger interview, 17 November 2011; CPO Duane Thorin, Memoirs, http://www.usgennet.org/usa/topic/preservation/journals/pegasus/peg-m.htm (accessed 21 November 2011), hereafter Thorin memoir; Chronological Record of Military Service for Albert W.C. Naylor-Foote; DPMO, KORWALD Loss Incident Summary for Albert W.C. Naylor-Foote and Duane W. Thorin, http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/korea/reports/air/korwald_info_3259.htm (accessed 2 February 2012).

43 Bok letter, 39.

44 Ulatoski interview, 7 March 2011.

45 *Guerrilla Warfare and Airpower in Korea*, 15; "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea," 155; "Unconventional Warfare in Korea," 31.

46 Ulatoski interview, 7 March 2011. Ulatoski estimated the total number of guerrillas assigned to KIRKLAND in December 1951 at around forty or fifty, but admitted that total guerrilla numbers were inexact during his time in the unit. There were South Korean intelligence elements on Nan-do that coordinated with KIRKLAND during the latter's operational lull in early 1952. Ulatoski letter.

47 CCRAK, 8240th Army Unit, "Guerrilla Operations Outline," 11 April 1952, cited in *Guerrilla Warfare and Airpower in Korea*, 96.

48 Ulatoski interview, 7 March 2011.

49 Officer's, Warrant Officer's, and Flight Officer's Qualification Record for Malcolm C. Ward, no date (last reviewed and signed by Ward on 6 March 1951), NPRC.

50 CCRAK, 8240th Army Unit, "CCRAK Guerrilla Summary, No. 107," 3 September 1952, Folder "Guerrilla Summary, CCRAK, 8240 AU, 1952, #93-151," Box 31, Entry 95C, RG 349, NARA; CCRAK, 8240th Army Unit, "CCRAK Guerrilla Summary, No. 108," 4 September 1952, Folder "Guerrilla Summary, CCRAK, 8240 AU, 1952, #93-151," Box 31, Entry 95C, RG 349, NARA.

51 8240th Army Unit, Guerrilla Division, "Report of Guerrilla Operations, 22-30 September 1952," 24, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. By September 1952, the number of American personnel assigned to KIRKLAND had increased markedly since April 1951, but it was still low given its mission and number of guerrillas. Assigned personnel included LTC Anthony J. Scannon, CPT Shelby D. Minton, 1LT Malcolm C. Ward, SGT Edward K. Mallon, SGT T.J. Phillips, CPL Curtis H. Page, Private First Class (PFC) Joseph T. Morgan, and PFC Robert F. Norris. Far East Command Liaison Detachment, 8240th Army Unit, "Assigned Officers," 30 September 1952, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

52 CCRAK, 8240th Army Unit, "CCRAK Guerrilla Summary, No. 146," 12 October 1952, Folder "Guerrilla Summary, CCRAK, 8240 AU, 1952, #93-151," Box 31, Entry 95C, RG 349, NARA; CCRAK, 8242nd Army Unit, "CCRAK Guerrilla Summary, No. 154," 20 October 1952, Folder "Guerrilla Summary, 1952," Box 31, Entry 95C, RG 349, NARA; CCRAK, 8242nd Army Unit, "CCRAK Guerrilla Summary, No. 155," 21 October 1952, Folder "Guerrilla Summary, 1952," Box 31, Entry 95C, RG 349, NARA; CCRAK, 8242nd Army Unit, "CCRAK Guerrilla Summary, No. 156," 22 October 1952, Folder "Guerrilla Summary, 1952," Box 31, Entry 95C, RG 349, NARA; CCRAK, 8242nd Army Unit, "CCRAK Guerrilla Summary, No. 157," 23 October 1952, Folder "Guerrilla Summary, 1952," Box 31, Entry 95C, RG 349, NARA.

53 Record of Assignments for Anthony J. Scannon, no date, NPRC.

54 "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea," 69.

55 Ulatoski letter.

56 LTC Anthony J. Scannon to MAJ Stanfield, 11 November 1952, Folder "Correspondence Incoming," 8240th AU Files, cited in "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea," 76.

57 "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea," 67-69, 71, 156.

58 Eric A. Patterson, "Unconventional Assisted Recovery (UAR): Historical Case Study Analysis and Quantitative Feasibility Assessment" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2001), 36, 38-39.

59 Ulatoski letter.

60 "UN Partisan Forces in the Korean Conflict," 30.

61 "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea," 76-77; "Unconventional Warfare in Korea," 31; Mark Clark, *From the Danube to the Yalu* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), 212; *Guerrilla Warfare and Airpower in Korea*, 102-103.

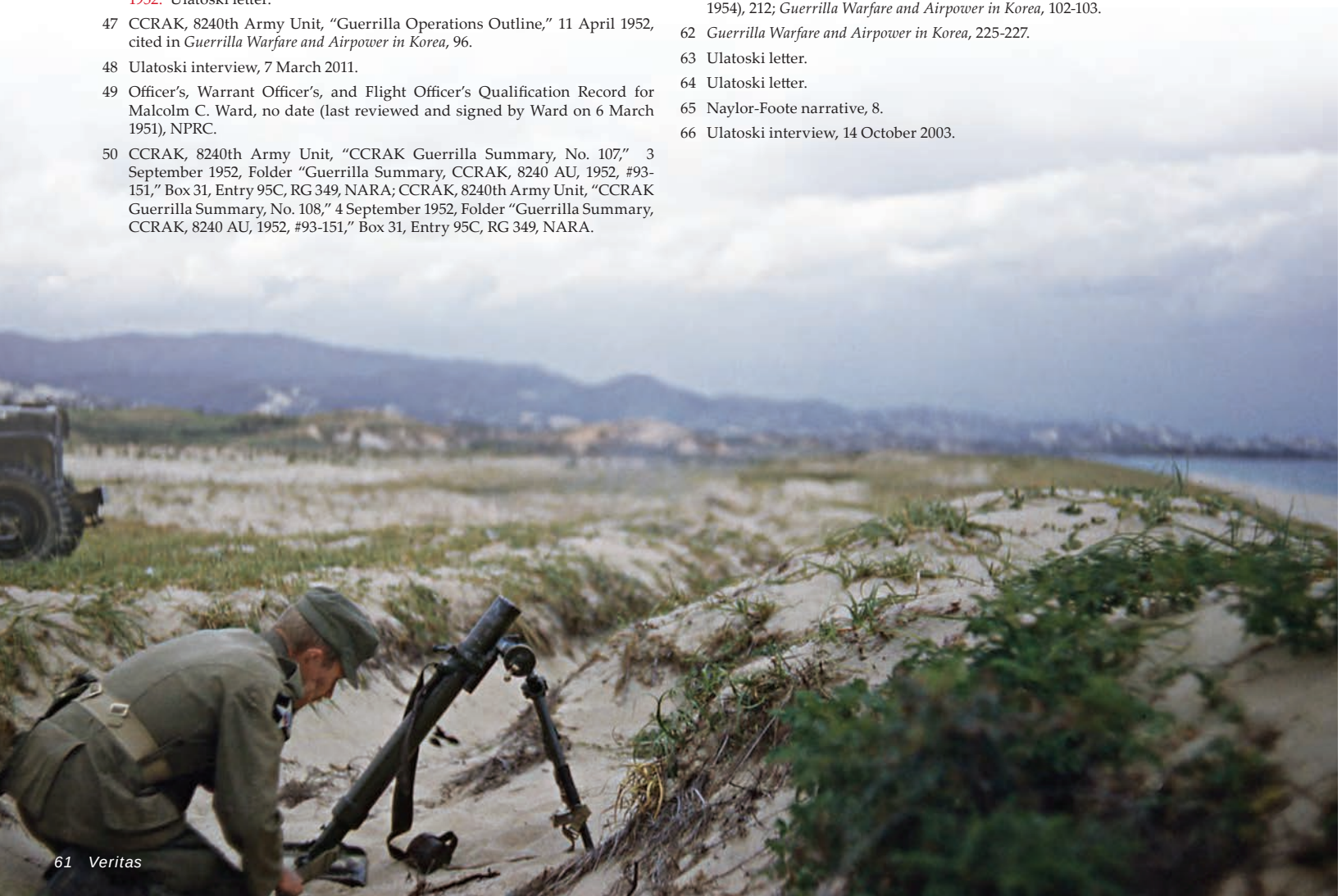
62 *Guerrilla Warfare and Airpower in Korea*, 225-227.

63 Ulatoski letter.

64 Ulatoski letter.

65 Naylor-Foote narrative, 8.

66 Ulatoski interview, 14 October 2003.



Facets of the U.S. Army Guerrilla Commands in Korea:

A Photographic Overview

This issue of *Veritas* and the next one are dedicated to the U.S. Army guerrilla commands at the Eighth U.S. Army and Far East Command levels. Both were written to correct some of the misconceptions about those elements and to help fill the historical 'gaps.' These problems have resulted from a perceived lack of primary source materials, limited access to available materials, or—as we have discovered after much research—an abundance of primary sources that can sometimes serve more to confuse than to clarify how the U.S. Army organized and conducted guerrilla operations in Korea. The large volume of primary source documents and photos used to produce these issues was collected from many disparate locations and included materials from veterans' personal files. We quickly appreciated that we were not dealing with a single, monolithic entity but several, each meeting with different degrees of success or failure. In fact, there were so many components of the Army's guerrilla warfare campaign that we had to limit ourselves due to time and space restraints. Without these documents and photos, though, we would not have been equipped to clarify aspects of this history and resolve many misconceptions. Most of the photos shown in this issue and the next were graciously provided by veterans or their families.

Troy J. Sacquety, PhD in Military History from Texas A&M University & Jared M. Tracy, PhD in History from Kansas State University.





1LT Kingston M. Winget

First Lieutenant (1LT) Kingston M. Winget reported to the Miscellaneous Group, 8086th AU in March 1951 after having served as a platoon leader in numerous combat actions since January, including the Battle of Chipyong-ni. He served in the East Coast guerrilla unit Task Force (TF) KIRKLAND at Chumunjin and Sokch'o-ri from April to December 1951 before returning to the U.S. and holding positions in the G-3 (Operations), 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, NC.

UNPFK vs UNPIK

The American advisors in the 8240th Army Unit (AU) wore an unofficial shoulder patch of two designs. The variation is because of slight name changes. In November 1952, the guerrillas of the 8240th AU were designated as United Nations Partisan Forces, Korea (UNPFK).[1] However, in September 1953, UNPFK was redesignated as the United Nations Partisan Infantry, Korea (UNPIK). This administrative change allowed the awarding of the Combat Infantry Badge to the American advisors.[2] This slight name change has resulted in some confusion, but both patches were worn by the same unit at different times of its existence.





United Nations Partisan Forces Korea (UNPFK) Unofficial Shoulder Patch



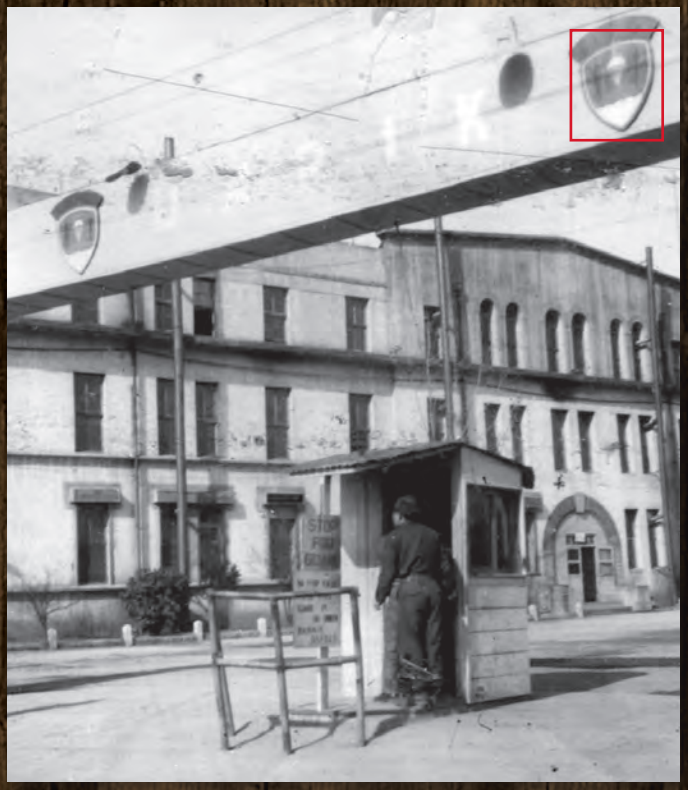
United Nations Partisan Infantry Korea (UNPIK) Unofficial Shoulder Patch

Endnotes

1 Frederick W. Cleaver, George Fitzpatrick, John Ponturo, *et al.*, "UN Partisan Warfare in Korea, 1951-1954" (AFFE Technical Memorandum ORO-T-64, Johns Hopkins University: Operations Research Office, 1956), 67. Despite the name, the guerrilla command was a single service organization (U.S. Army), and had no formal ties with the United Nations.

2 Glenn E. Muggelberg to Shaun M. Darragh, "Dear Maj Darragh," 28 November 1984, Glenn E. Muggelberg Papers, Papers and 201 File, Box 1, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

2LT Maurice H. Price



Second Lieutenant (2LT) Maurice H. Price served as a small unit commander in the 2nd Partisan Infantry Regiment (PIR), United Nations Partisan Infantry, Korea (UNPIK) in 1953-1954. At that time, UNPIK was focused on transferring administrative and operational control of friendly guerrillas to the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army. As part of the post-Armistice demobilization, Price and other 2nd PIR personnel, situated on Kyodong-do on the West Coast, had to destroy all unstable or non-standard explosives and munitions located on the island.





CPT Leon M. Demers

Captain (CPT) Leon M. Demers enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1936. He was commissioned in the Field Artillery in late 1942. In WWII, he served in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in both France and China with 1LT Herbert R. Brucker. In France, he was a member of Special Force Detachment Number 10, and in China he was the co-commander of Team AUK/IBEX. He served with United Nations Partisan Forces, Korea in 1952.











SFC George E. Yosich

Sergeant First Class (SFC) George E. Yosich joined the U.S. Army in 1947 after service in the Merchant Marine in WWII. In Korea, he was assigned to WOLFPACK and the 2nd Partisan Infantry Regiment, UNPIK from 1953 to 1955. He joined Special Forces in 1955, and served in the 77th and 10th Special Forces Groups (SFG) before participating in WHITE STAR in Laos. Following assignments in the 7th SFG and with Special Forces in Vietnam, and he returned to the 10th SFG in the early 1970s. He retired from the U.S. Army in 1975 as a Sergeant Major.



An anti Communist guerrilla unit conducts weapons training on one of the offshore islands.

Looking Ahead:

The Guerrilla Command Issue

Part II

by Michael E. Krivdo

In this issue we've introduced several factors that came together to produce the Army's first guerrilla command. The post-WWII Soviet occupation of North Korea led to the installation of a Communist government that spawned a resistance movement that became the core of an anti-Communist guerrilla force. In January 1951 the Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) sought to bring those fighters into the United Nations (UN) combat effort as expeditiously as possible. As a result, the EUSA looked to its premier problem-solver, Colonel (COL) John H. McGee, a versatile leader experienced in guerrilla warfare, to create a guerrilla command. Within a month of his being tasked with that mission, McGee's new command was up and functioning and busy conducting combat operations along both coasts of North Korea.

McGee's guerrillas, trained, supported, and directed by American Army advisors, fought aggressively to keep Communist forces off balance and tenaciously maintained a hold on the offshore islands that served as advance bases for raids on the enemy's weak flanks. McGee's fighters put their lives at risk by crossing into enemy-held territory to gain important information on troop dispositions and intentions. But changing strategic goals in the form of Armistice negotiations, UN acceptance of *status quo antebellum*, and diminishing international will to continue fighting began to affect guerrilla operations.

Despite those issues, the American-led guerrilla command persevered and even expanded while achieving some degree of success in the field. In the next issue, we'll continue with the maturing of the command as it created a third field unit (WOLFPACK Base on Kanghwa-do) and refined its operations on both coasts and in the interior. In addition to detailing the expansion of guerrilla warfare in North Korea, concurrent efforts to create a theater-level command and control organization for all special operations are presented and analyzed. These new developments resulted in another level of bureaucracy as the Combined Command for Reconnaissance Activities, Korea (CCRAK) tried to bring all of the disparate behind-the-lines special operations under one unified command. As will be seen, the various iterations of that new organization achieved disappointing results. One major factor leading to the failure of those efforts seems clear: the Far East Command (FEC) did not follow existing Army



Special Forces officers Murl F. Tullis (L) and Myron J. "Mike" Layton (R).

doctrine regarding the conduct of guerrilla operations. By not making the guerrilla command a theater-level unified command, it doomed the organization to struggle because it lacked requisite authorities or resources to accomplish its assigned missions. Furthermore, the influence of the Armistice negotiations and the hardening of the Main Line of Resistance (MLR) are examined to show how those factors impacted on the guerrilla campaign.

One new development that occurred in 1953 was the arrival of some of the first graduates of the Army's Special Forces (SF) qualification course. A total of about ninety-nine officers and NCOs were assigned to Korea between April 1953 and late 1954. Many served either with the guerrilla command or with the Tactical Liaison Office (TLO) teams attached to each American front-line division. All were trained in conducting unconventional warfare as members of cohesive Operational Detachments, and were well qualified to serve as advisers to the guerrillas. However, instead of employing these SF-trained soldiers as members of operational teams (as they had been trained), the men were assigned as individual replacements for guerrilla advisors rotating out of theater. This practice diluted SF capabilities and limited the ability of the Special Forces personnel to put their specialized training into use.

The next *Veritas* also presents another facet of unconventional warfare in North Korea – the activities of the Joint Advisory Commission, Korea (JACK), the Central Intelligence Agency's paramilitary arm within the theater. Like the Army's guerrilla command, JACK also tapped into the pool of friendly guerrillas, selecting and training candidates for its Special Mission Group (SMG) and inserting others as agents to convince fellow North Koreans to form clandestine groups or support Escape and Evasion (E&E) lines or safe houses. A series of three articles describe JACK's airborne and maritime operations, as well as informing readers regarding some of the insertion and extraction techniques or procedures that developed during the war.



Major Jack T. Young, 1951.

The last article in the issue chronicles the efforts of Major (MAJ) Jack T. Young, an American officer of Chinese descent who was tasked to screen a group of former Chinese Nationalist soldiers who defected from the Chinese Volunteer Army to identify the best candidates to serve as agents. MAJ Young spoke fluent Mandarin Chinese, several other dialects, and was proficient in the Korean language as well. Earlier he had led the Ivanhoe Security Force, one of the first units to enter P'yongyang in September 1950. He also had served as a general officer in the Chinese Nationalist Army before entering the U.S. Army during WWII, and was well-qualified to assess the capabilities and motivations of his candidates. His exploits are revealed for the first time in print.

This next issue will close out the Army's guerrilla warfare experiences during the Korean War. Unfortunately, many of the hard-earned lessons remained untapped and as a consequence some of the same individuals repeated those errors during the Vietnam War. In the interim, the 'Forgotten War' remained just that.

Michael Krivdo earned his PhD in Military and Diplomatic History from Texas A&M University. He is a former Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance Officer with varied special operations research interests.

"UNTIL THEY COME HOME"

Do you have any historical photos of U.S. servicemembers listed as missing or unaccounted for during the Korean War? The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) needs your help in acquiring photos of those persons that might aid in their identification. Since JPAC began its search in January 2012, it has received only a handful of images. Yet there remain thousands of casualties not yet identified or accounted for. There may be thousands of useful photos in the hands of families and military comrades that could help identify these brave unidentified fallen.

Photographs, preferably frontal views with teeth showing, are incredibly useful tools that aid in identifications via photo superimposition. The most useful to JPAC are electronic digital copies, scanned to at least 300 dpi. Hard copy photos are also appreciated.

If you'd like to submit an image, please include any of the 5 Ws (who, what, when, where, why) you have regarding the photo, and send it electronically to: pao_mail@jpac.pacom.mil, or mail the hard copy to the address indicated. Make sure to keep a copy for yourself, as donations will not be returned. They become part of the official records associated with that individual.

Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command
External Relations
310 Worchester Avenue, Bldg. 45
JBPHH, HI 96853

- For further information, see JPAC's website at: http://www.jpac.pacom.mil/

- For a complete listing of missing/unaccounted servicemembers from past conflicts, see: http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/

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Upcoming Veritas

GUERRILLA COMMAND PART II

The next issue of *Veritas*, Korea, Part VII-Guerrilla Command Part II will conclude the history of ARSOF in Korea by highlighting the fact that two separate, but parallel efforts were at work in Korea. U. S. and UN combat forces and the Guerrilla Command (later the 8240th Army Unit) under Far East Command (FEC) were oriented on tactical operations and committed to conducting direct combat actions. Simultaneously, a parallel group of organizations supplemented the tactical effort by focusing on strategic intelligence collection. These included the Combined Command Reconnaissance Activities, Korea (CCRAK), the Joint Advisory Commission, Korea (JACK) air and maritime activities, and Major Jack T. Young's recruitment and training of former North Korean and Chinese soldiers to become Allied intelligence agents. In 1953, all of these operations were augmented by the first involvement of trained U. S. Army Special Forces soldiers in combat.

